TELOS

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Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals*

by Alvin W. Gouldner

I.

The following remarks attempt to explore the role of the intellectuals in contemporary revolutionary transformations, and to apprehend their character and meaning. As a whole, the project has two versions of the argument, a weak and a strong one. The minimum project seeks to specify the historical mechanisms that contribute to the radicalization of Western intellectuals and induce them to play a role in the revolutions of the twentieth century. Grounded in the unchallengeable premise that the intellectuals have played a revolutionary role of *some* substance, this version of the argument does not commit itself to a judgment on how *important* their role has been. Considering that certain conventional accounts of revolutions commonly focus on their origins in the suffering of masses, even this weak version usefully focuses on the role of a privileged social stratum, an elite, that remains a repressed problematic of Marxist theory.[1] While both the weak and strong versions of the argument are concerned with identifying the socio-historical *mechanisms* that revolutionzie intellectuals, the more ambitious version argues also that their revolutionary role has been an *indispensable* one.[2]

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*Copyright © 1976 by Alvin W. Gouldner. All rights reserved. The author wishes to thank Dell Hymes and William Labov for many valuable suggestions that go well beyond their sociolinguistic erudition; and others at the British Sociological Conference in Canterbury on March 27, 1975, the Amsterdam Festival of the Social Sciences on April 10, the meetings of the Transnational Institute on March 8, and the University of Rome on May 2, 1975. None of these, of course, can be held responsible for any continuing defects in this work.

1. My position on the paradoxical role of intellectuals in a workers' movement is outlined in A.W. Gouldner, "Marxism and Social Theory," *Theory and Society*, I, 1, pp. 17-37. The repression of this problematic begins perhaps with Marx's critique of Wilhelm Weitling and Bakunin. This repressed problematic returns, with a mammoth resurfacing, in Maoism and in the Chinese Cultural Revolutions.

2. To attribute power of some degree to the revolution-making role of intellectuals does not imply that it is intellectuals, and they alone, who "make" revolutions. As Max Weber recognized: "Not ideas, but material and ideal *interests*, directly govern men's conduct." However, I focus on "interests" since the task of analysis should be to make visible *systematically obscured* consequential social processes. *Interests* are both consequential and obscured processes. They are systematically obscured by ideological commitments, while contributing to the production of these very ideologies. For a broader elaboration of this "doctrine of recovery," see my "Sociology and The Everyday Life," in L.A. Coser, ed., *The Idea of Social Structure: Papers in Honor of*

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There are (at least) two basic types of "intellectuals:" a *technical* "intelligentsia" whose intellectual interests are fundamentally "technical;" and "intellectuals" whose interests are critical, hermeneutic, emancipatory, and often practical-political.[3] My ultimate aim is a social theory which encompasses *both* intelligentsia and intellectuals, and which articulates how, in their very different ways, *both* are revolutionary and contribute to revolution-in-permanence.[4] In this paper, I have little to say about technical intelligentsia and shall confine the analysis mainly to the role of intellectuals.

The final *caveat* concerns the notion of "permanent revolution." There are some who imagine this term to be patented by the Parvus-Trotsky group. The term, however, dates back to the Saint-Simonians,[5] with whom *all* Marxists have had an authentic, lineal connection.

II.

Intellectuals began their modern historical career as effective revolutionary militants during the bourgeois revolution, when they spoke as "Jacobins" *in the name* of the "people" and the "nation." The emergence and development of Marxism itself is the social product of a network of young intellectuals, the Left Hegelians. Marxism arises in part as an outcome of the propertied middle class's Thermidorian halt to its own revolution. After that, revolutionary intellectuals could *no longer ally themselves with the propertied middle class* and had to move on in search of another "historical agent," an identity they later assigned to the proletariat.

Robert K. Merton (New York, 1975), and my "Dark Side of the Dialectic," *Sociological Inquiry*, forthcoming. For a full discussion of my theory of ideology and its relationship to "interests," see my *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (New York, 1976).

3. Although I am using Habermas' distinction between different kinds of "interests," to distinguish between different types of "men of knowledge," I do not stress the importance of "control" and the controlled experiment because, after all, biologists, evolutionists, and meterologists are scientists-without-control. I would define a "technical interest" much more in terms of Thomas Kuhn's notion of "normal" paradigm-centered, hence boundary-respecting puzzle-solving. See J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1968); and J. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (London, 1974). See also Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1970) and the discussion of this in I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge, 1970). For elaboration, see my discussion on these points below.

4. One common view is that the revolutionary potential is invested only in "intellectuals," but not in the *technical* intelligentsia. Without committing myself in the slightest to the crude thesis of a "managerial revolution," I do, however, also reject the equally vulgar, contrary thesis that sees the technical intelligentsia as mere social "agents," fully controlled by economic and political interests.

5. Within the Marxist tradition the idea of "permanent revolution" is grounded in the Enlightenment concept of an unending "progress": it is the *politicalization* of an unending progress. Thus it rejects progress as an automatic, gradualistic perfectionism, thereby entailing struggle rather than immanent unfolding, and discontinuities ("explosions") rather than only continuities. Both views can be found in Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians. What Marx and Trotsky did was to insert notions of the specific historical continuity of revolutions from bourgeois to proletarian, into Saint-Simonian and Enlightenment groundings. For some Saint-Simonian elements see *The Doctrine of Saint Simon: An Exposition, First Year, 1828-1829*, Georg C. Iggers, trans. (Boston, 1958), pp. 79, 81, 84.

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Whatever its aspirations, however, nowhere in the world have intellectuals achieved "socialism," if this is understood as the *rule* of society *by* the proletariat. In some part, this is impossible simply because some of the countries in which successful revolutions occurred from 1917 onwards were preponderantly peasant in composition. Even after their revolutions, the proletariat does not have control over the means of production.[6] In every case of "socialism," what has in fact been achieved is the victory of a political coalition in which *a central role* is played by the intellectuals and intelligentsia, transformed by a fulltime involvement in revolutionary politics and *re*socialized by the vanguard party, by a life of opposition, and by a protective insulation within the vanguard group. Much of the twentieth century's class struggles—particularly those resulting in the capture of state power—have not been *between* the capitalist class and the *proletariat*. The latter is a real struggle, but not the crucial one for understanding modern revolutions. The struggle of peasants for land has been far more important, although nowhere has their struggle ever been successfully consummated as a social revolution in the modern period except in alliance with and, indeed, under the political and cultural tutelage of intellectuals.

Essential to the successful peasant-grounded social revolutions in the twentieth century, then, there has been another kind of class struggle: an internecine struggle *within* the elite produced by the emergence of bourgeois society or in contact with it. In this internecine struggle, one part of the elite has its grounding in property and commonly constitutes itself as a national bourgeoisie. The most fundamental opposition to them has most commonly come from another elite, from another part of the elite, a section of the intelligentsia whose privileges are grounded in their *education, knowledge, culture, and language*. What then develops, often with the intensity characteristic of civil war, is a struggle *within* the ruling group itself as the basis of subsequent revolution.[7]

However, despite this conflict between the national bourgeoisie and the intellectuals and intelligentsia, the two are connected: the latter commonly originate in classes with property privileges or are sponsored by those so

6. The following discussion converges with Sweezy's and Debray's concept of the "substitute proletariat." See P.A. Sweezy's statement in *Monthly Review*, December, 1970. Cf. also S. Mallet, "Bureaucracy and Technocracy in Socialist Countries," *Socialist Revolution*, May-June, 1970. In the framework of normal Marxism it is puzzling as to how a non-proletarian class can, without living a proletarian life, as Sweezy holds, develop a proletarian consciousness. The question therefore arises as to the social character and origins of those who become the substitute proletariat. Our contention is that an important grouping among the substitute proletariat are (sections of) *intellectuals*.

7. Crane Brinton, of course, has long since noted that "the old ruling class—or, rather, many individuals of the old ruling class—come to distrust themselves. . ." Furthermore, revolutions also manifest a "transfer of allegiance of the intellectuals," which, Brinton says, "is in some respects the most reliable of the symptoms. . ." These two processes are really one, an internal rupture in the solidarity of the ruling class. Cf. C. Brinton, "A Summary of Revolutions," in J.C. Davies, ed., *When Men Revolt and Why: A Reader in Political Violence and Revolution* (New York, 1971), pp. 318-319.

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privileged. In other words, intellectuals are the *educated* counterpart of the propertied middle class. They usually are the studious brothers and sisters of those who make their careers through mercantile, industrial, or landed property. The intellectuals—including professionals, writers, technicians, clerks, journalists, lawyers, people of bookish culture—are a *cultural* bourgeoisie whose capital is *knowledge* and language acquired during their education.

When Goran Therborn stresses that Marxism was created by an intelligentsia of a very special character, a *non-Bohemian* intelligentsia, he may be read as saying that Marxism was created by an intellectual elite whose everyday life retained a *bourgeois* character.[8] Marxism was not generated by "drop-outs," communitarians, or drug-takers, but by intellectuals of bourgeois high culture and of ordinary bourgeois habits—when they could be afforded. As Eric Hobsbawm put it: "...revolutionary persons are today characteristically intellectuals (which does not mean that intellectuals are characteristically revolutionaries)."[9]

During the Russian revolution, "the leadership of the Bolsheviks consisted overwhelmingly of intellectuals, as did that of all other popular parties of opposition."[10] In the Russian Communist Party's first phase (lasting until Lenin's death in 1924), there is little question that the dominant role was played by the intelligentsia, by theorists of middle class origin, who were well travelled, who spent considerable time in Western Europe, who were more likely to have come from towns and cities, who were cosmopolitan in outlook, and who were highly intellectually productive.[11] The intelligentsia who first dominated the Russian Communist Party wrote prolifically, despite their intense and harried lives. They believed, in effect, that so far as the revolution was concerned it was "publish *or* perish"—although subsequent history suggests that the rule really was, "publish *and* perish."

In the Third World much the same situation has prevailed. Franz Marek

8. G. Therborn, "The Working Class and the Birth of Marxism," *New Left Review*, May-June, 1973: That Marx remained moored in many conceptions of respectability, which some now define as bourgeois biases, may be seen in his relation to his daughters, his son-in-law, LaFargue, to Lassalle, to Helen DeMuth and their illegitimate child, and, alas, in Marx's attitudes toward entire peoples and ethnic groups, including the "Moors" and Jews. The rediscovery of these prejudicial views in Marx has deeply anguished sections of the ethnically committed radical movement in the United States. For an elaboration of this, see Carlos Moore, "Were Marx and Engels White Racists?" *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 1974-75, pp. 126-156, the replies to which largely beg the question and simply say, "Marx and Engels are dead."

9. E. Hobsbawm, *Revolutionaries* (London, 1973), p. 245.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

11. Of a total of 25 members of the Polibturo of the Russian Communist Party from 1919 to 1950-51, and whose education we know about, nine had a university education, two went to seminaries, six went to high schools or other higher schools, three to trade schools, and five to elementary school. Note, however, this sample even includes the Stalinist period, when intellectuals were scarcely in favor. See G. Schueller's analysis in H.D. Lasswell and D. Lerner, eds., *World Revolutionary Elites* (Cambridge, 1965); and W.E. Mosse, "Makers of the Soviet Union," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 1968, pp. 141-154.

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has thus argued, "Spontaneous uprisings of the peasantry...show us where the power behind the national revolutions in the colonial countries really lies. It is the intellectual elite who show the peasants how to organize, and do the organizing."[12] Again, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party begins with Ch'en Tu-hsiu who taught at Peking University and who, together with that university's chief librarian, Li Ta-chao, began organizing socialist intellectuals at the University about a year after the Russian Revolution. As a student, Mao organized such groups in Changsha. With a very few exceptions, and despite China's poverty, from about 1921 to 1951, practically all of the Chinese Communist Party's leading members had a university education.[13]

The revolution in Vietnam unmistakably parallels that in China, in the important role assumed by intellectuals: "In traditional Vietnam the leadership of wars of resistance against foreign invaders and their Vietnamese elite collaborators was provided by Confucian scholars who had remained in their villages instead of accepting official posts as mandarins...in the second half of the nineteenth century...[I]n time-honored fashion scholars led the first sustained resistance to the French, the Van Than (Scholars' Resistance) and Can Vuong (Loyalty to the King) movements of 1885-97 ... [T]he heroic words and deeds of that period were added to tales of earlier scholar-led uprisings."[14] Ho Chi Minh, who subsequently synthesized the national, the modernizing, and the social revolutionary aspects of the Vietnamese revolution, was born in central Vietnam. This had been a major center of Can Vuong activity, which, as Christine White notes, "produced a disproportionate number of Vietnamese revolutionary leaders." Most generally, it was the poor, or subsequently impoverished, scholars or their children who, in particular, came to play leading revolutionary roles.[15] As in China, many of

12. F. Marek, *Philosophy of World Revolution* (New York, 1969), p. 98.

13. In his autobiographical comments to Edgar Snow, Mao spoke of himself as "the scholar of his family." Chou En-lai conducted his studies in China, Japan, France and Germany. Chu te, sometimes deprecated as a mere military leader, began his studies at Yunnan Military Academy but also studied in Europe where he, together with Chou En-lai, founded the Berlin branch of the Chinese Communist Party. Liu Shao-chi went to Hunan Normal School and studied advanced economics in the USSR. Of the 29 Politburo members—up until 1965—whose education we know about, only two had no higher education, and only two had only a Chinese education. Twenty-five of the 29 had a higher education in some foreign country. Many studied in Soviet universities such as the University of Moscow, Sun Yat-set University, the Red Army Academy, the Lenin Institute, and others. Indeed, one of the first projects underttaken by Ch'en Tu-hsiu was to organize the School of Foreign Languages in Shanghai and to prepare promising young student radicals to study abroad. But even omitting their higher education in the USSR, some 38% of the early leaders of the Chinese Communist Party studied abroad in advanced capitalist countries. Study in France, in particular, played an important part for many, including Ch'en Tu-hsiu. Ho Chi Minh studied there as well.

14. P. White, "The Vietnamese Revolutionary Alliance: Intellectuals, Workers, and Peasants" in J.W. Lewis, ed., *Peasant Rebellion and Communist Revolution in Asia* (Stanford, 1974), p. 80.

15. This is clearly Pelzer's own point. It may be profitably compared with the class character of the left Hegelians: "...the Young Hegelians...were not simply a bourgeois intelligentsia... they were a *declassé* and radicalized section of the petty bourgeoisie." Therborn, *op.cit.*

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the young revolutionary intellectuals received their education abroad, particularly in Japan and France.[16]

The above references to the origins of Marxism and to Third World revolutions exhibit the importance of the intelligentsia in initiating modern revolutions. It will immediately be apparent that intellectuals have also played a prominent role in the other movements and other parties: in conservative, middle class, nationalist, or even reactionary movements with which the revolutionary movement competes and against which it struggles. If intellectuals contribute to the initiation of *counter*-revolution, why make a special point of linking them to modern revolutions? First, it should be said that all political ideologies do *not* in fact have the same opening or attraction to intellectuals. For example, those Nazis who said, "when I hear the word culture, I reach for my gun," had a different relation to intellectuals than did revolutionary Marxists. Nazi intellectuals rarely made it to the top of the party apex and whether administrators or propagandists, there was a "negative correlation between education and party status among the Nazi elite."[17] The fact that intellectuals attach themselves to various parts of the political spectrum reinforces the view that they are a social stratum *shopping* for an historical agent and thus not irrevocably committed only to one class alliance. Thus it reinforces the thesis about the *relative autonomy* of the political role intellectuals may play. As any modern political force, they are a stratum with their own interests and cultural commitments, in pursuit of which they will experiment with different group alliances. At any rate, reference to the fact that intellectuals may be found on both, or all, sides of a political struggle only reinforces my contention that there is an internecine character to modern political struggles: it is not just a struggle between different classes.

To understand the nature of the contemporary revolutionary movements, several things are required. First, a clear understanding that we are talking about the *Third World*, not about Western Europe and North America.

16. Ho Chi Minh's father "sent him to the first high school in Vietnam to combine Vietnamese and Western education." Ho subsequently went to France, first joining the French Socialist Party, and then the French Communist Party, on its emergence in 1920. In 1924, Ho was one of Borodin's Comintern staff in Canton, and began forming the first Vietnamese Marxist cadres. In Canton, Ho taught a course on Revolution and mass organization, which was a training ground for the Indochinese Communist Party's early Politburo, Giap and others being among Ho's students. In various forms, then, public and party schools and schooling were a decisive influence in forging the Indochinese revolution.

17. Lasswell and Lerner, eds., *op.cit.*, p. 463. Similarly, more of the leadership of the CCP went abroad to study than had leaders of the Kuomintang—which is not to say that these were the only differences in their leadership's social origins. From the very beginning, the Communist Party leadership had a relatively higher percentage of peasantry, and the Kuomintang a higher percentage of the sons of merchants. The latter's political effectiveness *and* legitimacy was undermined by their use of their political positions to pursue their private economic interests. Clearly, this discussion is situated in the "theory-praxis" problem in Marxism. Without doubt the discussion in the "Introduction" of J. Habermas' *Theory and Practice, op.cit.*, is one of the most concise of contemporary, critical accounts available. Cf. also the excellent discussion by N. Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice* (South Bend, Indiana. 1967).

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Secondly, these struggles are not merely *local* struggles; they are not explainable solely in terms of the unique cultural or special structural features of each locality. What has been happening is a world-scale interaction between Euro-American (and, lately, Japanese) technology and culture, and distant, weaker societies penetrated and disrupted at every level by these power centers. Contemporary revolutionary transformations throughout the world are conjunctures of social forces with different time-tables and of different *durées*. On one level, these revolutions are the product of an interaction between *class* tensions *locally* rooted in different parts of the world, and an intelligentsia that has a world-wide character. This intelligentsia is the bearer of a special grammar of rationality, of a special culture of critial discourse partly rooted in the relatively context-free language variants they use, the sharing of which enables them to communicate with and to learn from one another, despite differences in their local culture. To exaggerate: Marxism became the Latin of revolutionary intellectuals throughout the world (when Latin was still a vital, not a dead, language). Marxism transcended local differences and facilitated the communication and sharing of a world-wide experience. Whatever the subsequent reinterpretations, revisions, or adaptations of Marxism by the intelligentsia of the Third World, the social revolutions with which we are most concerned, have been unmistakably influenced by Marxism. Much of the ideological *opposition* to Western imperialism in the Third World has been Marxist or Marxist-influenced, and that very Marxism has been unmistakably a product of the West. It cannot be denied that in the Third World it has been a European model of rationality and discourse that was imposed by Western domination and the school system brought by the imperial powers. Indeed, they could impose no other.[18]

III.

The foraging spread of colonialism, imperialism, commercialism, and industrialism; the new products for export to old societies and their consequent need for cash to pay for them; the new markets for these old societies' raw materials; the new tax systems to pay for new systems of administrative order, all this and much more rapidly deteriorates traditional religions, subverts folk arts, family systems, local economies, social structures, and ecologies. The old peasant societies begin to crumble, many dissolving into anarchic disorder, as they are opened to exploitation from the West. Much of these developments proceeded from an external stimulus but there were also profound changes internal to peasant societies. Among these, as Eric Wolf has related, was a great demographic upsurge of population, in

18. It should be strongly emphasized that in speaking of the significance of the "Western" Intelligentsia for the social revolutions of the Third World, I am not denigrating the greatness of their own ancient civilizations; I am *not* propounding a cultural imperialism vaunting the West. I am only attempting to give a correct assessment of the influence of European culture, both as a source of *exploitation* and of *resistance* to that exploitation.

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some cases facilitated by the conquest of the largest epidemics through the use of Western technologies.[19] There was, too, the increased use of land for commodity production. As land comes under the sway of market forces, land use loses its responsiveness to the needs of the local peasantry working it: "Commercialization disrupted the hinterland; at the very same time it also lessened the ability of powerholders to perceive and predict changes in the rural area. The result was an ever widening gap between the rulers and the ruled." And as Barrington Moore showed (in Wolf's formulation), where "traditional feudal forms were utilized in Germany and Japan to prevent the formation of such a gap in power and communication during the crucial period of transition to a commercial and industrial order," the system did not break down or succumb to radical changes. But where there was no administrative system of military feudalism to bridge the growing gaps, there was "the formation of a counter elite that could challenge both a disruptive leadership based on the operation of the market and the impotent heirs of traditional power, while forging a new consensus through communication with the peasantry. Such a counter elite is most frequently made up of provincial elites relegated to the margins of commercial mobilization and political office; of officials or professionals who stand midway between the rural area and the center. . . and of intellectuals who have access to a system of symbols which can guide interaction between leadership and rural area."[20] It is my contention, however, that in the beginnings of such resistance, intellectuals are among the central leadership forces, and not just mediating elements.

In many Third World societies, there is little or no proletariat to ground resistance to the West and to serve as the "historical agent" of rational social change. The only groups in these societies capable of seeing what is happening to society as a whole, are—as they often were also in the *West*—sections of the elite and particularly, intellectuals—i.e., school teachers, journalists, clerks, lawyers, persons who had a close view of (and a larger perspective on) the invading economies and cultures, and were not "locals" confined by village perspectives or everyday business routines. Many, of course, became the invader's subalterns, their "native" agents for administrative systems of "indirect control." Some, however, oppose the invaders, resisting because they experience the outsiders as a foreign degradation and exploitation of their society, or because they can find no future for themselves

19. It is ironic that the West's development and spread of lifesaving technologies may, no less than its imperialist exploitation, contribute to ecological disruption and, thereby, to the grounding of revolution. Humanitarian medical technologies may be no less a *cause* of revolutions in peasant societies than imperialist exploitation, but nowhere nearly as much of a *justification*.

20. E.R. Wolf, "Peasant Rebellion and Revolution," in N. Miller and R. Aya, eds., *National Liberation* (New York, 1971), pp. 53-54. An important intervening variable: intellectuals' access to symbol systems is of course access to *political mobilization*. It is precisely their access to the *latter* that grounds the intellectuals' own political position, giving it a measure of autonomy. Symbolic control, then, *is* a vested *interest* yielding political opportunities for those having it, just as control over capital yields economic advantages to its owners.

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in the foreigner's world. In order to meet their own manpower needs, the foreign invaders often set up public schools and, as Edward Shils, C. Wright Mills, and others suggest,[21] begin training a native intelligentsia whose size soon exceeds the career opportunities available to them. The invaders, then, bring their new intellectual culture; they create and school a new, Europeanized intelligentsia in it; and they leave an articulate group of them without any personal prospect except that which may be provided by revolution.

Nowhere do intellectuals seek power in their own name. Being a small group they can mobilize power only in *alliance* with *other* strata. They also create new political structures of their own, rational political organizations such as the "vanguard party." These vanguard structures create an independent organizational power base for sections of the intellectuals, and through which, in turn, they can assert themselves over, routinely mobilize, and develop alliances with other social strata—peasants and proletariat. In a way, the "vanguard" structure is a solution to the historical problem that the Jacobin leaders of the French Revolution—themselves predominantly intellectuals[22]—had never solved, namely, how can an intellectual elite retain influence over either urban masses or the agrarian countryside.

Third World intellectuals are not just pursuing their own vested elite interests. They commonly feel a genuine identification with larger groups and often, indeed, an outrage on behalf of a demeaned national identity. They often give authentic expression to national resistance to exploitation by aliens, and they are central to nationalist movements which often contribute to or converge with social-revolutionary developments. But precisely *whose* interests do such revolutionary intellectuals represent? One answer must stress the importance of different local conditions and the *diversity* of class interests which the revolutionary intelligentsia represent in the Third World. One must say: it depends on who there is to be represented, and this varies with conditions. Commonly, the peasantry, being the major fighting force of Third World revolutions, will be among those whose interests are represented, and whose struggle against feudal holders, money lenders, and landlords is supported. But there is a second answer. This says simply that *whomever* intellectuals represent and *however diverse* the latter may be, intellectuals also, and always, represent their *own* interests. More than that: intellectuals always represent the interests of other classes as they see, define and interpret them; and their interpretations are selectively mediated by

21. See E. Shils, "The Intellectual in the Political Development of the New States," *World Politics*, 1960, pp. 329-368. Cf. also C. Wright Mills, *Power, Politics, and People* (New York, 1965), pp. 413-414.

22. On this, see the good discussion by Lewis A. Coser, *Men of Ideas* (New York, 1970), pp. 146-147. According to Coser, the top leadership of the Jacobins was composed largely of intellectuals whose careers *had* manifested some upward mobility, but whose future ascendance was cut off by aristocratic preemptions; i.e., they were "blocked ascendents." The further study of the diverse career blockages is crucial to an understanding of the radicalization of intellectuals.

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their *own* social character and special ambitions as an historically distinct social stratum.

Other groups in an underdeveloped society are often unaware of their society's larger needs, or are not free to act on their behalf. The native bourgeoisie is often small, passive, and dependent on the alien economy; its everyday life is also tied down by the routine chore of administering its own properties. Its political energies are confined by their busi-ness. Intellectuals, then, may have considerable autonomy in such a society. Their political initiatives are further strengthened by their ability to see the society as a *whole*, by their sheer theoretic training, by their cosmopolitanism, by their elite position, and by their socio-ecological marginality. Being slighted as intellectuals, of a demeaned nationality, and as a wronged elite whose once high expectations have been thwarted by outsiders, they are often pulled into revolutionary leadership. And they are capable of quickly drawing upon a larger, world-wide, political experience, in part, precisely because of their language skills. They are a more sociologically mature elite than the native bourgeoisie and they soon learn how to use their symbolic skills for political mobilization, once they learn to integrate European critical discourse with their local culture. That last is no small consideration. A European culture, a reflexive language variant and education, isolates intellectuals from the persons in their own local culture, unless they can translate back-and-forth between the two *cultures* and languages.

One consideration needs adding: it is not only that intellectuals *can* take the standpoint of the social "whole," by reason of their structural position or special culture; intellectuals often occupy social roles and have had educations that induce them to define themselves as "representatives" of the larger society or nation, or of the historical or native tradition of the group. Teachers and clerks are often educated to define themselves as having a responsibility to their group as a whole. However "false" such a consciousness may be, it is often real in its consequences, inducing some intellectuals to accept responsibility for and obligation to cultural symbols and social structures that *unite* the group as a whole. It is also in their character as traditional *elites*, as the "wronged" elites of invaded traditional societies, that they have been trained to take the standpoint of "their" people and to see the society as a whole. Historically effective elites are commonly trained, as well as positioned, to take the standpoint of the totality, even if seeing it only from the top down.

There is little doubt that some, and perhaps many, intellectuals become revolutionary or support revolutionary programs, in part because it is in their *material* interests to do so.[23] It is not just "material" interests however, that

23. One is reminded here of Franz Fanon's condemnation of colonial intellectuals as the "spoilt children of yesterday's colonialism and of today's national governments. . . [who] organize the loot of whatever national resources exist. Without pity, they use today's national distress as a means of getting on, through scheming and legal robbery, by import-export combines, limited liability companies, gambling on the stock exchange or unfair promotion." F. Fanon, *The*

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govern intellectuals' conduct, but their interests *both material and ideal*; it is also their special vested interest in their education, knowledge, language and culture of critical discourse, and in these as such, and not only in the incomes or prestige they may produce.

IV.

Central to the historical process through which intellectuals come to play a leading role in the permanent revolution of the twentieth century are certain decisive historical episodes and structural developments. A history of the political evolution of modern intellectuals—which this is not—would have to consider the following developments:

1. A process of secularization in which some intellectuals are no longer "organic," trained by, living within, and subject to close supervision by a churchly organization and by which they had been separated from the everyday life of their society.[24] Moreover, secularization de-sacralizes authority-claims and facilitates the challenge to everyday or casual speech made by users of "careful speech" (to use William Labov's terms).[25] Secularization is also important because it is the infrastructure of the modern culture of reflexive discourse with its stress on *self*-groundedness—in Martin Heidegger's sense of the "mathematical project."[26]

2. The rise of diverse vernacular languages and the corresponding decline of Latin as the language of the intellectuals, especially as the language of their scholarly production, increasingly thins the membrane between the *everyday* life and the intellectuals—whether clerical or secular.

Wretched of the Earth (London, 1963), p. 39. Despite Fanon's well-known contempt for the timidity and corruption of the intelligentsia, he attributed to them an important role in the social revolutions of the Third World. As one critic of Fanon trenchantly observes, "...implicit in his analysis and his hopes that militants from the African towns will go to the countryside to organize, is the concept that it will be the intellectuals from the towns that will play this role of leadership... it is clear that he expects that, from amongst the main body of intellectuals, most of whom he depicts as hypocrites, there will emerge a number who will provide the leadership of the revolution. After all, for whom was Fanon writing? Certainly not for his mainly illiterate peasants and *lumpens*." J. Woddis, *New Theories of Revolution* (London, 1972), p. 397. Fanon's judgment of intellectuals is similar to C. Wright Mills'. Cf. E. Schneider, "The Sociology of C. Wright Mills," in G.W. Domhoff and H.B. Ballard, eds., *C. Wright Mills and the Power Elite* (Boston, 1968), p. 21.

24. Obviously the notion of an "organic" intelligentsia is indebted to Gramsci. Let me add that it is not at all my intention to suggest that modern intellectuals are the secular counterparts of clerics. E.A. Shils, however, stresses this continuity, viewing intellectuals as sort of priests *manquées* whose essential character is their concern with the sacred. Cf. E. Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays* (Chicago, 1972).

25. Initially, Labov used "careful speech" to mean careful pronunciation, and the notion of "casual speech" to refer to spontaneous speech, when "minimum attention is being paid to his speech" by the speaker. The emphasis was at first phonological. My reading of Labov, however, suggests that he attributes great importance to speech reflexivity more generally, and not only to careful pronunciation. Thus Labov stresses the *general* importance of self-monitored speech. See W. Labov, *Sociolinguistic Patterns* (Philadelphia, 1972), p. 208. This formulation brings Labov's views into clearer convergence with Basil Bernstein's distinction between a restricted and elaborated sociolinguistic variant on the basis of their different reflexivity. With this in mind, I use careful speech, critical or reflexive discourse as synonyms.

26. M. Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?* (Chicago, 1970), p. 97.

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3. The breakdown of the feudal and old regime system of personalized *patronage* relations between specific members of the old hegemonic elite, and individual intellectuals or cultural producers.

4. A corresponding growth of an anonymous *market* for the products and services of intellectuals, which allows them to make an independent living, apart from close supervision and personalized controls by patrons. They may now more readily take personal initiatives in the public sphere, while also having a "private" life.

5. The decline of the extended, patriarchical family system and its replacement by the smaller, nuclear family. With declining paternal authority and growing maternal influence,[2] the autonomy strivings of children are now more difficult to repress; hostility and rebellion against paternal authority can become more overt. There is, correspondingly, greater difficulty experienced by the older generation in imposing its social values and political preferences, and in reproducing them in their children. This is not a "Freudian" but a *socio-structural* observation.

6. Following the French Revolution, there is in many parts of Europe, perhaps especially France and Germany, a profound reformation, development, and extension of the system of *public*, *non*-church controlled, (relatively more) *multi-class* education, at the lower levels as well as at the college, polytechnical, and university levels. On the one hand, higher education in the public school becomes the institutional basis for the *mass* production of the intelligentsia and intellectuals. On the other, the expansion of primary and secondary public schools greatly increases the livings and jobs available to intellectuals.

7. The public, more cross-class, educational system is now insulated from the family system and becomes an important setting for the development of distinct values among students, divergent from those of the students' families. The socialization of the young by their families is now mediated by a *semi*-autonomous group of teachers. While growing public education limits kin influence on education, however, it increases the influence of the state on education.

8. The public educational system also becomes a major *cosmopolitanizing* influence on its students, with their corresponding distancing from *localistic* interests and values.

9. The new public school system becomes a major setting for the intensive *linguistic* conversion of students from "casual" to "careful" reflexive speech or (in Basil Bernstein's terms) from "restricted" linguistic codes to "elaborated" linguistic codes,[28] to a culture of critical discourse in which claims and

27. Arthur Mitzman has stressed the importance of this in the emergence of the anti-bourgeois views of 19th century intellectuals. Cf. also my "Romanticism and Classicism," in A.W. Gouldner, *For Sociology* (New York, 1974). Kenneth Keniston's clinical materials on certain types of new leftists in the later 1960s seem to indicate a similar role for the mother. Basil Bernstein also holds that where social status depends on education, maternal influence grows.

28. See B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control:* Vol. I, "Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language" (London, 1971); Vol. II, "Applied Studies Towards a Sociology of

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assertions may *not* be justified by reference to the speaker's social status. This has the profound consequence of making all *authority-referring* claims potentially problematic and vulnerable. These school-inculcated "careful" modes of speech are, also (relatively) situation-free language variants. Their situation-freeness is further heightened by the "communications revolution" in general, and by the development of printing technology in particular.

10. With the spread of public schools, literacy spreads, and with this, humanistic intellectuals lose their exclusiveness and their market position may be impaired. Humanistic intellectuals experience a status disparity between their "high" culture, as they see it, and their lower deference, repute, income and social power. The social position of humanistic intellectuals, *particularly in a technocratic and industrial society,* becomes more marginal and alienated than that of the technical intelligentsia.

11. The production of intellectuals (and intelligentsia) with their careful speech styles, relatively context-free, elaborated linguistic variants, and their alienating culture of critical discourse, is also continually produced and reproduced by that very ancient structure of contentious social interaction called the "dialectic." Quite apart from *formal systems* of education, this social structure also produces and imprints intellectuals with a special grammar of reflexive discourse that, in various other ways, further estranges them from their *local* culture.[29]

12. Finally, a major episode in the emergence of the modern intelligentsia with a revolutionary potential is the transformation in form of the revolutionary *organization.* Revolution itself becomes a technology to be pursued with "instrumental rationality." The revolutionary organization evolves from a ritualistic and oath-bound secret society into the modern Communists have nothing to hide,[30] it is exactly that emergence into a Communists have nothing to hide, it is exatly that emergence into a (de-ritualized) public life which is implied. Here, to be "public" entails the organization's rejection of "secret doctrines" known only to an elite in the organization—as, for instance, Bakunin's doctrine of an elite dictatorship of anarchists.

Language" (London, 1973); Vol. III, "Towards a Theory of Educational Transmission" (London, 1975). Bernstein's reformulations of his position, his creative response to important criticisms, are best exhibited in his "Social Class Language and Socialisation," in T. Seboek, ed., *Current Trends in Linguistics,* Vol. 12 (The Hague, 1974), pp. 1546-1552.

29. Plato, *Republic,* 437 DE. The dialectic frees *energies* from older cultural commitments and mobilizes them for new ones. The question here, then, is not simply that of the career of an "idea" but of the "libido." The alienating consequences of the dialectic were grasped with firm clarity by its first reflexive philosopher in the West, Socrates, who declared: "Do you not remark . . . how great is the evil the dialectic has introduced. . . . The students of the art are filled with lawlessness." In short, the dialectic like any elaborated speech variant, is also characterized—as the discourse of reflexive speech—by certain profound *failures and costs.* This, of course, is why Bernstein's distinction between elaborated and restricted linguistic codes cannot be understood as correlated with "good" and "bad" speech. Bernstein himself apparently now agrees. Cf. his article in the volume edited by Seboek, *op.cit.*

30. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Communist Manifesto.* Authorized English edition edited by Engels (Chicago, 1888), p. 58.

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The *modern* "vanguard" structure is clearly encoded in Lenin's book *What Is to Be Done?* Here it is plainly held that the proletariat cannot by itself develop a *socialist* consciousness. It is also firmly stated there that modern socialism requires an elaborated linguistic variant, i.e., a "scientific theory" developed by the intellectuals.[31] Indeed, following Kautsky, Lenin believed that Marxism was threatened with intellectual dilution when suddenly exposed to a mass influx of workers. It was, therefore, the task of the new vanguard party to bring socialist theory and consciousness *to* the proletariat from the outside. The vanguard was to maintain a pyramidal structure, democratic centralism, which ensured that the party remained under the firm control of those in possession of "scientific" socialist theory, Marxism, and enabled them to imprint it on the others.

In effect, then, the vanguard party was the instrument of a radicalized intelligentsia. But it was not just a mechanism through which they could mobilize and exert influence over workers. The vanguard was, at the same time, an instrument for the protective insulation, for the political re-socialization and retraining, and for the self-transformation of intellectuals who were already "radicalized." The vanguard party, then, is not simply the instrument or "front group" of intellectuals. It is not just a simple extension of revolutionary intellectuals but is, rather, the organizational mediation of their political praxis.

The vanguard organization has and develops its own logic, and this comes in contradiction with the grammar of the intelligentsia. Intellectuals are centrally characterized by—indeed, have as their common ideology—a culture of careful discourse requiring that positions be defended by reasons given, rather than by invoking the status of the persons advancing them. Above all, the characteristic culture of intellectuals premises that human problems are grounded in an ignorance that is (at least partially) removable by critical, reflexive discourse. In short, the common culture of intellectuals places a central value on talk, particularly self-reflective discourse. But a vanguard

31. Later, in 1914, more than a decade after his *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin attacked Trotsky as singing "old liberal and liquidationist tunes" and for writing an article in which Trotsky, who often manifested contempt for intellectuals, had spoken of the vanguard structure as "an organization of the Marxist intelligentsia." Lenin then asked indignantly whether it was intellectuals who had led the strikes of 1895-96. But obviously, these strikes were fully known to Lenin when he wrote *What Is to Be Done?* in which a central role is assigned intellectuals, just a few years after they occurred. Recent arguments by Louis Menashe and Antonio Carlo, about Lenin's supposed change of heart concerning the vanguard, would be more convincing had Lenin moved to change the *organizational structure* on which his views remained engraved. By 1914 Lenin backs away from the Kautskian position of *What Is to Be Done?* but he never really *theoretizes* a coherent alternative. More importantly: the theory of the vanguard is fundamentally encoded not in a book, but in the Bolshevik *Party*, which Lenin never changed. See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 20, p. 343. See also *What Is to Be Done?*, p. 53 of the International Publishers edition. Cf. also K. Kautsky, "Akademiker und Proletarier," *Die Neue Zeit*, April 17, 1901. Cf. also the discussion by N. Krasso of Trotsky's position on intellectuals, in Nicolas Krasso, ed., *Trotsky: The Great Debate Rnewed* (St. Louis, 1972), pp. 18ff., and the subsequent discussion there by Ernest Mandel.

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structure is an instrument of social combat. Its military exigencies and dangerous position compel it to insist on disciplined obedience to decisions made by party authorities, in part simply because they are superiors. It requires that, at some point, discourse be suspended and action taken. The vanguard organization, then, particularly as coded by Lenin, tends to *de*-value discourse as an end-in-itself, and, indeed, to demote it, making it subordinate to political practice. Although it starts as the instrument of radicalized intellectuals, the vanguard party thus soon becomes a most recalcitrant instrument. In bringing the vanguard party into being, the intellectuals also bring into being the seeds of their own political disillusionment and displacement. Much of the history of the development of the Russian Communist party, for example, is a history in which the October revolution was made by urban-born cosmopolitan intellectuals but was later taken over by the rural-born.[32]

Given a tightly disciplined vanguard organization of a certain size, there need be no one distinctive set of societal conditions necessary for revolution; all that may be further needed is the instrumentally effective mobilization of such discontent as exists, and the exploitation of some calamitous historical episode. At the same time, it is precisely because of the great initiatives open to the vanguard organization that it need not be the agents of (the need and rationality) of the larger society, or of masses in it. The development of the vanguard thus *empowered* the revolution technologically at the cost of threatening its rationality. In the end, the vanguard organized by a rationalizing elite must demand loyalty to itself as a requisite of successful political combat; it thus becomes an agency of a particularism which, in turn, leads the intelligentsia that once supported it to desert it.

V.

In one way or another, all of these important episodes have contributed to the social character of the modern intelligentsia and, especially, to its

32. It is exactly that demographic transition that is part of the infra-structure of Stalinism. As a successful revolution is institutionalized, the technical intelligentsia tends to replace intellectuals among the leadership corps. One of the latent functions of the vanguard structure is, by habituating them to discipline and hierarchy, to resocialize intellectuals into (administrative and communication) intelligentsia, and accommodate them to bureaucratic styles. In other words, to "diseipline" them. As Stalinism develops, the contradictions and tensions between the vanguard party and intellectuals intensify. One critique of Stalinism, from the left, generally implies that it has undermined the revolutionary elan of the vanguard organization. But that does not imply an end to the revolutionary role of intellectuals, as can be plainly seen from the Cuban Revolution. The success of Castro's group of militant, university-trained, military intelligentsia in overcoming the Old Regime in Cuba, and their ability to launch a revolutionary initiative, depended in part on their having been *outside* of the Stalinist "vanguard;" it depended on the fact that they had successfully maintained their autonomy from it and had outflanked it. While the Communist Party in Cuba ultimately inherited the revolution, there is little doubt that this revolution was at first led by a group of intellectuals outside of it. The Cuban Revolution plainly exhibits how a group of revolutionary intellectuals used the vanguard organization and seized upon Marxism itself for the realization of their own radicalized purposes. Rather than being the "tool" of the Communist Party and of Marxism, they made these their instruments.

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potential alienation from its surrounding society and its potential radicalization. Since all of them cannot be dealt with, only one commonly neglected aspect will be examined here—specifically, the linguistic dimension.

The modern intelligentsia is the product of an historically unique system of *public* education;[33] of a *mass* education; a (relatively) multi-class education; an education *away* from the *home* and thus away from parental monitoring; of an education subject to the mediation of a section of the intelligentsia, teachers, whose role concept, status, culture of discourse and material interests dispose them to deny or repress class differences, for teachers are often lower in class than their students. It is an educational system in which the *residential* living pattern of a young cohort is also conducive to the development of egalitarian values, class differences submerged under common styles of dress and life. This egalitarianism is reinforced by, and in turn contributes to, a culture of critical discourse in which it is the *argument* that is heeded, *not* the speaker or his *position* in the larger society.

Modern Western, especially secondary and tertiary schools, may be looked upon in various ways. But however various and whatever else they do, they are also *language* schools: schools aiming to produce changes in language variants and discourse rules, to produce a speech conversion in their students. This culture of reflexive discourse is no longer automatically subordinated to the given system of authority and societal stratification. This relative status-autonomy is also reinforced by the value placed by school culture on *reading* and *writing*. Ultimately, then, the modern intelligentsia, and the modern public school system that mass-produces them, are both grounded in the *communications* revolution, and most especially in the revolution in printing technology. The relevant characteristic of the printed object is that it involves the mass production and spread of *writing*, which can be divorced from persons and situational cues. Writing tends, therefore, to be more fully explicated than spoken utterance; its meaning must be susceptible to a relatively situation-free interpretation which is conducive to the development of relatively elaborated language variants.

My own conception of both a *technical* intelligentsia and humanistic *intellectuals*, is specifiable in terms of the importance in their speech of elaborated, relatively situation-free linguistic codes. The view that I wish to advance here is that intellectuals can be conceptualized rigorously only in terms of the "language game" they play, in Wittgenstein's sense, and as a

33. If one inquires into the nature of the differences between intellectuals and others, the usual common sense impression—that this is, somehow, connected with their education and use of books—is not altogether wrong. Churchward is thus *near* the mark when he defines the "intelligentsia as consisting of persons with a tertiary education (whether employed or not)... tertiary students, and persons lacking formal tertiary qualifications but who are professionally employed in jobs which normally require a tertiary qualification." L.G. Churchward, *The Soviet Intelligentsia* (London, 1973), p. 6. We hold, however, that tertiary schools are significant for some as mechanisms of conversion to the culture of reflexive discourse.

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speech stratum. I shall say that a speech stratum is "one all of whose members share at least a single speech variety and the norms for its appropriate use."[34] As a distinct speech stratum, intellectuals tend to use, relatively more than others, a culture of relatively reflexive discourse, entailing, in Basil Bernstein's terms, more frequent use of an "elaborated" sociolinguistic variant and implying a greater value placed on the norms characterizing this speech modality. This elaborated sociolinguistic speech variant is now normally acquired in the reading, writing, and talking governed by modern public schools, particularly universities, or schools channeling students into them. It can also be acquired elsewhere, in other social situations that similarly seek to control and retrain speech, reading, and writing. Thus one of the things that the "vanguard organization" does is to educate workers to use relatively elaborated sociolinguistic variants. Intellectuals are a speech *stratum*, although not always a speech community, because their common speech variant has been derived relatively less from mutual face-to-face interaction with others who speak it and, relatively more, from *reading*. It is thus, that in sharing reference works, common language paradigms, and relatively situation-free, elaborated sociolinguistic variants, intellectuals who have never met acquire a pre-established sharing that facilitates their social interaction should they ever meet. This is connected with the fact that speech variants used by intellectuals are relatively standardized; that is, its lexicon and grammar are articulate, being set down in writings to which members of the speech stratum may refer or cite. They also have a reflexivity concerning it which takes the form of "historicity," an awareness of the origins and evolution of the principles articulatable.

The boundary-defining "speech act" of the *elaborated* speech variant, distinguishing it from the *restricted* variant, is the act of "justification," the arguments given in support of any given contention that is challenged. How one justifies challenged claims is decisive in distinguishing elaborated from restricted speech variants, the former relying less on the social status of the speaker in general and still less on his *ascribed* status, in particular. The careful styles of discourse and relative situation-freedom of the elaborated variants spoken by intelligentsia or intellectuals generate a greater degree of "cosmopolitanism" among them. One expression of this cosmopolitanism is that intellectuals commonly value persons and ideas *not* of their own *birth culture* or their own *age cohort*.[35] To be a modern intellectual, then, means to participate in a world-wide culture increasingly separable from specific local contexts. Those trained to a culture of a relatively reflexive discourse variant are capable of readier communication with others so trained, whether

34. J.A. Fishman, "The Sociology of Language," in T.A. Sebeck, ed., *op.cit.*, p. 1642.

35. This is exactly why the New Left's slogan, "trust no one over thirty," during the 1960s, excited more hostility and suspicion than the New Left anticipated. For the slogan was taken as a subliminal signal of the New Left's *anti-intellectualism*, being seen as a violation of the code hitherto conventional to intellectuals, which required that the *speech*, not the *speaker*, be attended to.

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they are a technical or a humanistic intelligentsia, even though they have shared no common lived-history. They may be brought together, then, not by common histories or memories but by a common language and its grammar. Intellectuals, then, may be at home almost anywhere. Or they may be *homeless* anywhere, feeling an alienation from all particularistic, history-bound places, and feeling separated from an everyday life unintelligible except to those sharing the same tacit background assumptions.

Everyday life commonly operates with a stress on "indexicality," saying that everything depends on its surrounding, and on what has gone before. Intellectuals, however, prefer a voluntaristic rule, that words mean what they say they mean—one word, one meaning. Intellectuals thus commonly operate with a linguistic variant diverging from that of everyday life. They wish to be free to re-examine the standpoint of the common sense and of the everyday life. In the culture of critical discourse that characterizes intellectuals there is both elitism, which inevitably places limits on rationality, as well as a stress on *overcoming* the *traditional* limits on rationality normally found in everyday life and in its institutionalized system of stratification. Because of this ambiguity, it is extremely difficult to speak of intellectuals' special culture of discourse without falling into either an anti-intellectual populism hostile to elitism, or into the elitism of intellectuals who are contemptuous of everyday life, casual speech, and "ordinary" people. The real crux of the historical problem of intellectuals and intelligentsia cannot be grasped, however, unless both sides of this contradiction are fully and firmly understood. And this comes down to insisting that they are *both* elitists and the bearers of an emancipatory rationality: their rationality enables a critique of the institutionalized forms of domination, but it also contains the seeds of a *new* form of domination. Their new rationality entails an escape from the constraints of tradition but imposes new constraints on expressivity, imagination, play, and insists on control rather than openness as the key to truth, on a certain domination of nature, including the self, rather than on a surrender to it.

The intellectuals' culture of careful and critical discourse implies that it is now possible for anyone, however rich or powerful, to speak wrongly. It implies that whatever is *may* be wrong or may be made better. What exists is now subject to negation, to critique, and to judgment. A system of norms, a grammar, has thus been partially detached from the institutionalized system of class and power[36] and now claims authority and the right to sit in judgment, even over certain of the actions of the upper class and power-elites. (Where grammar still exists, writes Nietzsche, god is not yet dead.) Yet, in setting themselves up as judges of established systems of stratification, the speakers of the new grammar, the intellectuals, only undermine *traditional*

36. The tensions between a semi-autonomous system of prestige and the other two basic stratificational dimensions, class and power, are discussed systematically in A.W. Gouldner, *Enter Plato* (New York, 1965), pp. 314-319.

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inequities, but they tacitly affirm a method which is itself the standard of a new inequality. To speak well is better than to speak poorly, they imply. To speak and live with reflexive self-examination is better than living an unexamined life, they affirm. Philosophy is better than art, they hold. Thus even as the traditional inequities are subverted, a new hierarchy of the knowing, the knowledgeable, the reflexive, and insightful is silently inaugurated. This is a central contradiction of emancipatory intellectuals—the new universal class in embryo—that brings a new darkness at noon.

A culture of reflexive discourse and the maturation of a situation-free speech variant legitimates the taking of a "purely" *theoretical* attitude toward something; it requires that the speaker be able to formulate—in Peter McHugh's terms[37]—what he is doing in some rule, thus heightening the split between theory and practice. Reflexive styles of discourse are those in which speakers are judged competent to the degree that they *know* and can *speak* its rules, rather than just *happening* to conform to them. It implies speakers capable of adopting and envaluing a theoretical attitude. It is perhaps now becoming clearer how situation-free language variants are implicated in some of the role styles that characterize intellectuals. Exalting theory over practice, discourse over action, intellectuals have long believed that those who know the rule, the theory by which they speak and act, are superior types because they lead an *examined* life. Such a theoretical attitude is sometimes concerned less with the *success* of a practice than that, successful or not, "praxis" should have submitted itself to a reasonable rule. And insofar as intellectuals are concerned not just with success, but with doing things in the *"right" way* and for the right reason, we may say that they are open to a certain *sectarianism*, if by that we understand placing priority on doctrinal conformity *per se*. Secterianism is theoreticity ritualized.

VI.

It seems, then, that *political* implications are inherent in a commitment to a culture of critical speech and to situation-free linguistic variants. We begin to glimpse how permanent revolution is grounded (in part) in the linguistic variants and culture of reflexive discourse characteristic of the intellectuals. A relatively situation-free linguistic variant fosters an alienation from *conventional* cultures and from conventional instrumentalities. This may take the form of a continuous technological rationalization, as by engineers, technicians, or experts. Here there is a kind of permanent revolution against the technology and culture in being, which operates within and tacitly *accepts* the master political and economic institutions. It is in this and other ways limited. On the other side, this discourse-and-language fostered alienation—in the case of intellectuals—is also conducive to a politically revolutionizing potential that *rejects* the conventional political and economic institutions. In

37. P. McHugh, "A Common-Sense Perception of Deviance," in H.P. Dreitzel, ed., *Recent Sociology, No. 2* (London, 1970), pp. 165ff.

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seeing theoreticity, reflexivity, sectarianism, elitism, and affect-repression as implicated in critical speech styles, we begin to explore some of the ambiguous sources of intellectuals' opening toward a radical *anti-status quo* politics. A focus on the culture of critical discourse and the linguistic dimension promises to provide a basis for a *unified* theory of the Western intelligentsia, technical and humanistic, and of their readiness to act against traditional cultures and established social structures.

The distanced and alienated positioning of "intellectuals," in relation to the culture of everyday life, applies also to their distancing from the *conventional* epistemological, methodological, and science-producing canons of scholarly communities. Alternately stated: intellectuals are those who are readier to engage in a critique of conventional knowledge and knowledge-generating institutions, including those paradigms that are the consensual ideals of scholarly communities, and of the elaborated variants which they speak. Scholars and scientists are intellectuals insofar as they adopt the standpoint of "critique" to the *paradigms* and elaborated speech variants of their respective domains of scholarship and science. In *that* special sense, intellectuals may adopt—as Nisbet emphasizes—an "adversary" relationship to their society in general and to knowledge paradigms in particular. Unlike Nisbet's claim, however, we see both dispositions grounded in their education-implanted culture of reflexive discourse, in their historical grammar of rationality, and thus as closely linked to and not divorced from their character as "men of knowledge." Therefore, Nisbet's claim that intellectuals have a hostility to knowledge *as such* must be rejected.[38]

38. R.A. Nisbet, "Review Symposium," *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1973, pp. 712ff. Nisbet correctly notes that there are certain similarities and continuities among the Sophists of fifth century B.C. Athens, "the Greek rhetoricians in Rome after Rome's conquest of the world, the humanists of the Italian Renaissance,...the *philosophes* of the French 18th century, the denizens of Europe's coffee houses around 1848, and, far from least, the intellectuals of our day in New York, London, Paris, and other capitals...we have here a recurrent social type in history" (p. 715). I concur. Indeed, what I have done here is to establish the *grounding* of this continuity in terms of intellectuals' common sharing of an elaborated sociolinguistic variant and its culture of reflexive discourse. I part company with Nisbet, however, when he holds that the communality among these men was "their almost uniformly hostile and contemptuous attitude toward men of knowledge as such...the basic rootlessness of mind and conscience, the clear tendency to flout the establishment, to assume more often than not [an] adversary position toward the official and the conventional, and to proffer instant reason or intuition in place of either traditional authority or the kind of knowledge that goes into scholarship and science" (*ibid.*). This is all a bit breath-taking. How much does anyone really know about the ancieht Sophists, on the basis of their own work and which is not derived mainly from their *enemies*, such as Socrates and Plato? How, for instance, would Nisbet like to have his scholarly contribution judged by Marcuse? This, in effect, was what happened to the Sophists, who were only wandering scholars before the time of fixed academies and were surely among the most learned men of *their* time. Indeed, in their tolerance of "rhetoric," certain Sophists affirmed a "value free" position not unlike that of normal academic sociology today. Even on Plato's suspect account, surely the sophist Protagoras was an immensely learned man. Quite apart from Voltaire's wit, surely he contributed to the development of the "new," modern historiography as much as any scholar of *his* period—at least, according to Cassirer. And can we really shunt aside the *philosophes* as men to be remembered only for their (very temperate) politics? May we reasonably claim that D'Alembert, D'Holbach, Diderot, and Montesquieu were intellectually trifling—to say nothing

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Intellectuals do not reject scholarship as such but the "normalization" of enquiry—in Thomas Kuhn's sense of a "normal" science. Such normal science operates within a paradigm that the scholarly community takes as given and whose limits and boundaries it does not prolematize. The rejection of the in-paradigm puzzle-solving of normal science is precisely one of the factors involved in "revolutions," and other changes, in science and scholarship. This rejection entails a responsiveness to the historical crisis of a conventional scholarly tradition, rather than a contempt of scholarship as such. In effect, then, "intellectuals" are those whose intellectual work has the character of critical inquiry. This, in turn, implies that they focus on and are capable of moving across the boundaries of normal science with its normal division of labor. Paradoxically, then, critique is an instrument of synthesis. Intellectuals, then, are scholars who reject, make problematic, or critically focalize the boundaries hitherto implicit in normal scholarship and the scholarly paradigms on which the scholarly community had, till then, centered, and their elaborated speech variants. Searching out and transcending the conventional boundaries of "normal" scholarship, they are an irritant to conventional scholars, who condemn them as deviants. Rather than operating safely within the familiar boundaries of an established paradigm, intellectuals violate boundaries. They mingle once separate disciplines; they pass back and forth between ordinary and artificial languages; between the "common sense" and technical tradition. Such boundary transgressions sometimes generate scandalous intellectual incunabala; but, sometimes, they are the basis of powerful intellectual breakthroughs and of rich innovations.

To be a practitioner of "critique" means in part to employ a standpoint outside of a normal science and its established paradigms. To be a "normal scientist" is to be fascinated by "technical interests," which means, according to Kuhn, puzzle-solving work that operates (and fills up the empty symbolic space) *within* a paradigm. Normal scientists are thus essentially routine, puzzle-solving technicians. It is precisely because Kuhn's work has this implication, thus radically transvaluing the conventional prestige of science, that his work has aroused not merely reasonable criticism, but unscholarly displays of intemperate rhetoric.

The technician, the scholar-scientist with a "technical interest," accepts the dominant paradigm in his field; he operates within it, pursuing its implications, applying its general principles to new fields; but he does not focalize or criticize the boundaries of the paradigm itself. Normal science's mode of creativity is the creativity of finding new *applications* of accepted

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of the great German *Aufklärers*, including Kant? And while the scholars of the Renaissance commonly disdained the scholastic tradition of scholarship, this was often (in the view of scholars such as Herschen Baker), "an effort to return to an older purity. . . or to restudy and revise the apparatus for ascertaining truth," rather than rejecting the search. When Nisbet condemns Renaissance scholars for their "hostile and contemptuous attitude toward men of knowledge as such," he is condemning them for departing from a by-then wooden Thomism and Scholasticism!

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principles. Thus it is not that intellectuals are not scholars, but that they do not reduce scholarship to the pursuit of technical interests.

It is in these terms that we may, in part, distinguish intellectuals and intelligentsia: intelligentsia are technicians who revolutionize culture by exploring the inner space of an established paradigm, neatening it up, fine-tuning it continuously, extending its established principles to new fields, or finding new opportunities of extending practically useful controls over the environment. Intellectuals, however, are those who, within any cultural sphere, do not take normal science as given. It is not, then, that they reject knowledge as such, but only *normal* knowledge. In this perspective, intellectuals are thus not simply those *opposed* to the old intellectual paradigm but are those somehow more *open* to its cumulating crisis. An essential distinction, then, between intellectuals and intelligentsia is to be made in terms of their *boundary*-behavior.

The work of intelligentsia, their form of *production*, is one that takes certain grounds as already firmly established, as secured, as certain, as "positive." Indeed, their tacit test of the "goodness" of scientific-technical work is that it *confirms* the secured givenness of the world by establishing its *productivity*. The question here is "fruitfulness;" but the "tree" bearing the fruit is regarded as in being. The intelligentsia are thus harvesters, not planters, from the standpoint of intellectuals. Nietzsche creates a paradox when he tells us that "decadence" is the time of *harvesting*. A paradox, because "progress" and the "progressive," grounded as they are on that which they *inherit*, are thus a time of decadence, living off their inheritance as cultural *rentiers*. In this sense, enlightenment progress and decadence are inseparable, for here one pays attention to the foundations, to the inheritance, only after it ceases to be productive, and only *after* we are no longer able to live off of it. The "decadent" then are *consumers* of culture, harvesters, the heirs of someone else's productivity. They live off of and "manage" their inheritance of culture, managing it to produce a *yield*, but are not disposed to undertake a *renewal* of the foundations, of the cultural capital. They do not make its *reproduction* problematic.

Intelligentsia (as distinct from intellectuals), then, are those whose work is a dialectic of progress *and* decadence. They produce "progress" as the culmination and harvesting of "implications," building on foundations taken as given without systematically incorporating a notion of "renewal," without systematically recognizing that the foundation will not be eternally fruitful and is, instead, subject to the law of diminishing returns. Their work repertoire does not incorporate systematically the expectation of necessarily "declining yields," nor a set of skills to cope with the time of declining yields. *That*, they say, is a matter of "inspiration," which is just another way of expressing their *ambivalence* toward their grounding: they respect its generative powers, but, although it is their progenitor, they turn away from it to "move forward," and are forgetful of their obligation to do grounding-work. If decadence is thought of only as a "going-down," dying, or

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decaying, then the paradox nuclear to the characterr of the intelligentsia is occluded. One must also be able to see as decadent certain kinds of going-*up*; certain culminations of activity and energy; certain forms of *progress*. Decadence is a form of *growth* which does not replenish its own foundations. This is the defining dilemma of intelligentsia. They are technical activists who divide up that which is treated as already "there." They are apportioners, the carvers of *internal* realms who, like invaders coming upon an already settled and fruitful land, conquer it, divide it up among themselves, live off of it, administer it, and maintain "order."

The intelligentsia, then, are an *Appolonian* type, who build *within* boundaries already created by others. Yet they are builders and preservers. As Appolonians they are very "sane" or, at least, *modest* persons. It is this sanity and modesty that is expressed in the sobriety and prudence of the "professionalism" claimed by a technical intelligentsia. To claim one is a "professional" is to make a modest claim. It is to acknowledge one's debt to a body of technology, knowledge, skill, and to the "community" in which this resides. *Professionalism is the communism of the modest*; it is to claim status by reason of *membership* in the community of the skilled or learned, to submit oneself to its discipline and judgment, and to place oneself under its protection. The professionalism of the intelligentsia tacitly acknowledges that it did not *make* the world, that it did not *create* the world, that it lives off a world it came upon, that it must respect the limits of the *community* of other professionals, and must accept their discipline. The sociological maintenance of that community constitutes a limit on their work and thought, as distinct from the "logical" or "cognitive" limits that may inhere in its intellectual traditions. The professional knows it is costly to offend the guild solidarity of his professional group. Fundamentally, then, intelligentsia are tacitly committed to the reproduction of their community of professionals and technicians, and to the maintenance of its tradition. As cognitive work, "technical" work and "technicians" are characterized by this Apollonian acceptance of limits, and the sentiment of "respect." Their standard of propriety points toward a paradigm of "competence" which is the skillful use of the battery of methods and assumptions presently given consensual validation by the professional community, and implies sheer conformity with community-validated method, apart from the success with which it is applied. It is not the "break-through" but the adept use, not the powerful innovation but skill at the marginal distinction, that marks a man as *competent*.

The situation is quite otherwise with intellectuals. Here, the virtue prized is "creativity," not productivity or competence. Unlike the "classical" idiom of a predictable professionalism, the more "romantic" idiom of creativity may see itself as grounded in unpredictable "genius" that breaks with tradition and the past. The fundamental structure productive of such creativity—the creativity of intellectuals—is a violated diglossic bi-linguality in which the multiple languages spoken are not only functionally differentiated but possess a firm hierarchical structuring. Diglossia implies a linguistic "division of

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labor:" two or more languages which may, or may not, be accessible to one group of speakers, as, for example, where an elite speaks one language and a subordinated group another, but which are functionally interconnected in economic or political entities. Bilinguality implies the capacity of a speaker to *switch* from one to another language, each of which he may (or may not) define as specific to different functions. Thus a *violated* diglossia means that a language is *normally* recognized as having a special function, *but* that this traditional coordination of language and function is violated. This re-combination is achievable only with difficulty because the traditional linguistic specialization is still in force in the larger group and the new combination is defined as deviant. It is such *violated* bi-lingual diglossia that is a *necessary* (not *sufficient*) condition for that "incongruity of perspective" which may generate valuable novelties. In other words, violated bi-lingual diglossia is a necessary condition for that "creativity" which is status-awarding in the community of *intellectuals*. Stated otherwise, creativity entails the *violation* of a switching rule, and is thus a form of linguistic *deviance*. Here one uses a language to solve a problem for which it is not traditionally defined as proper, in the speaker's language community. By the nature of the case, then, such "creativity" must be inhibited and scarce. To state the conditions of this creativity, in terms we have used before, *it is born of a linguistic boundary transgression*.[39]

The structure conducive to creativity is one in which several languages are not only functionally differentiated, but firmly *hierarchical*. By this I mean that the speaker has a language around which his work normally pivots. While he has access to other languages, and a readiness to depart from conventional language usage, he does not treat all languages as equal or equally important to him. Given an ambiguity of hierarchy or an equality of languages, *within one speaker*, the result may be an ineffectual "eclecticism," seeing diverse sides of one problem but not *reintegrating* them into a single structure. Eclecticism is a form of diglossic multi-lingualism, in which different languages are used in connection with one problem, but there is no resolution concerning which language is to integrate the diverse aspects of the problem newly focalized by the several languages mobilized to deal with

39. A *sociological* conception of "genius" would see genius dramaturgically and account for the *production* of geniuses, as an aspect of the *dramaturgy* of violated bi-lingual diglossia. The phenomenology of genius is centered on the "black box effect." Which is to say: an "unusual" and valuable solution is presented to some problem of importance. The "genius" is one who *seemingly* works with the usual ingredients of an intellectual problem but who, unlike others, produces a radically different and workable solution. That is, his "input" is the same as others, but his "output" is creatively variant. Something had happened in the "black box" from which his variant solution emerged. What happened was: he violated the traditional switching rules, using a language not normally used to deal with that problem; hence the novelty of his solution. And hence the "black box effect." For since he broke the switching rules, using a language he was *not supposed to use*, he usually hides, represses, suppresses, glosses over his linguistic deviance. He hides (from himself or others) the fact that he was using an unconventional language to talk about some problem. It is this *concealment* of the boundary transgression that produces the black box dramaturgy characteristic of "genius."

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them. Unless multiple languages are focused simultaneously on "one" problem there will not be the "incongruity of perspective" that may generate creativity. But unless these multiple languages are structured hierarchically, the resultant creativity is limited by the problems of eclecticism.

The root of the creativity that so concerns intellectuals, as distinct from intelligentsia, is, then, in the nature of a boundary transgression. Boundary transgressions can be essentially of two kinds. (1) Either the use of an "artificial" language that is not conventionally used in a given situation, so that there is an unconventional switching of artificial languages, or (2) an unconventional switching between artificial and *ordinary* languages. In the first type of switching, the switch is from one elaborated linguistic variant to another. In the second case, the switch is from an elaborated to a restricted linguistic variant (casual speech), or vice versa. The first type of switching, to elaborated from elaborated, is sometimes mediated by a prior switch to a restricted variant, so that one sometimes gets from one technical language to another by first switching to an ordinary language.[40] Insofar as intellectuals are definable in terms of their concern with creativity, and are thereby involved in boundary transgressions, they are differentiable from intelligentsia by their openness to *metaphor*. The condensation of metaphor is a form of linguistic switching that constitutes an *ad hoc* solution to the problem of eclecticism. It resolves unclear structuring and ambiguities, and overcomes qualms about improper switching behavior, by linking hitherto separated languages, and the realms of experience they generate. It does this by mobilizing *affect* from one speech situation, often the affect accessible only to casual speech, and by making it available to another, more *affectless*, technical speech, thereby making it more difficult to dismiss casually a new or incongruous perspective. But more than that, metaphor *imposes* the shift in perspective; the listener is plunged into the new perspective before he has had the time to reject it on the grounds of its illicitness, or even to consider whether it involves an appropriate switch. Metaphor achieves its liberating effects precisely by paralyzing theoreticity; by numbing reflexivity; by suspending a self-conscious concern for the rule and rule-groundedness. Which is why metaphor is anathema to normal speakers of elaborated linguistic variants, or, at least, technical languages; given William Labov's "hypercorrective" effect, it is *particularly* abhorrent to the newer, *less* established technical languages.

VII.

Our thesis concerning the importance of the revolutionary role of intellectuals is continuous with a tradition of radical social criticism, a

40. In this connection it is interesting to note that Freudian therapy proceeds by *inhibiting* the use of self-consciously *careful* speech, by inhibiting the use of technical languages, or elaborated linguistic variants, and by encouraging "gut" casual speech, to obviate the affect-inhibitions built into elaborated linguistic variants, and thus to bring feeling to awareness. The premise is that pathology involves blockages between reflexive and casual speech and, correspondingly, that therapy entails the creation of boundary permeability.

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tradition in which the thesis was first formulated and simultaneously repressed. The theory is clearly manifested in Bakunin's formulation. As an anarchist, Bakunin was concerned not only with eliminating economic differences but all differences in power, including differences in education or knowledge. As he remarks: "It stands to reason that the one who knows more will dominate the one who knows less. And if there were, to begin with, only this difference in the upbringing and education between two classes, it would in itself produce in a comparatively short time all the other differences, and human society would. . .split up again into a mass of slaves and small number of masters, the first working for the latter as they now do in existing society."[41] Here, then, is one of the first clear formulations of the central importance of education as a mechanism for reproducing class differences. It embodies enlightenment premises about the power of reason, knowledge, and ideas, that were initially carried into socialism via "utopian socialism," perhaps especially in its Saint-Simonian version.[42]

In contradistinction to this, Marxism, which constituted itself in part by its polemic against other competing socialisms, especially "utopian socialism," emphasized the importance of property institutions and the mode of production as the grounding of *power* in society. Marxism expressly rejected as "idealistic" utopian socialism's stress on knowledge and science as a source of power. This inevitably obscured the political role of intellectuals, tending to confine them to the "ideological" sphere, which, Marxism stresses, is "in the last instance" determined elsewhere, by the mode and forces of production. Marxism was grounded in the experience of the industrial (and French) revolution, in which the forces of production were first galvanized by a commercial mode of production employing the technical innovations of artisans. Installing this as its paradigm of the relation between knowledge and production, Marxism therefore did not stress the central place of technology and of the technical intelligentsia or scientists in developing it; it placed still less emphasis on those intellectuals who were guardians of the ideological superstructure.

Marxism, in short, had made its central theoretical commitments on the basis of the limited historical experience that had preceded: (1) modern technology's systematic cooptation of science; (2) the full explosion of the communication revolution; and (3) the mature development of the system of mass public education, especially higher education. It is precisely these subsequent developments that made more salient the growing role of the technical intelligentsia and of intellectuals, and which generate a growing dissonance for the nuclear Marxist model that had focused on *property*-rooted power, and had occluded the role of intellectuals and intelli-

41. M. Bakouinine, *Ouvres* (Paris, 1911), Vol. 5, p. 135, cited in M. Nomad, *Aspects of Revolt* (New York, 1959), p. 106.

42. The most important *contemporary* expression of this combination of a radical egalitarianism, with the critique of educational institutions as a potential mechanism for reproducing class differences is, of course, Maoism and the Cultural Revolutions in China.

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gentsia.[43] Marxism, as a doctrine of *proletarian* revolution, is constrained to avoid or repress formulations that focalize the paradoxical eminence of intellectuals in a workers' movement. Which means that Marxism can barely bring itself fully to acknowledge—let alone, understand—the central place of intellectuals in *constituting Marxism itself*.[44] Marxism is thereby profoundly and fundamentally limited in its capacity for *reflexivity*. The ultimate false consciousness of Marxism is exhibited in this: the historical role to which it "summoned" the proletariat was a summons made by an invisible summoner; i.e., by an invisible intelligentsia, an intelligentsia whose role in its own theory is not theoretized and whose social character is therefore not known systematically to itself.

The role of the intellectuals as revolutionaries is first judged critically by Marx's adversary, Bakunin, who thereby breaks with the enlightenment elitism of utopian socialism—at least in his *public* doctrine! This thesis is later adumbrated by the Polish-born, Russian revolutionary, Waclaw Machajski (1866-1926). Following his studies in exile, Machajski came in 1898 to the following conclusions: "1. That socialism, for all its 'proletarian' protestations, was the ideology of the rising new middle class of intellectuals, professionals, technicians and white collar workers, and not of the manual workers."[45] Rigorously speaking, however, it is not this formulation that makes Machajski different from Lenin, or, for that matter, from Kautsky. Machajski's further contention, that socialist parties in Western Europe "were

43. The response to this dissonance largely expresses itself in efforts to re-work the infra-structure-superstructure relationship fundamental to the conceptual basis of Marxism. At bottom, this reworking sought (and still seeks) to find a way of assigning greater "autonomy" to the ideological superstructure without contradicting its imputed determination by the economic infra-structure, "in the last instance." The very way in which this problem is conceptualized, however, i.e., as a problem in the relationship between (infra- and super-) *structures*, is an "objectivism" that commonly occludes rather than makes apparent the *actors* in the superstructure. It is as if one would like to acknowledge the importance of ideas and science without also affirming the importance of *men* and *women* of ideas and of science, and of the action of intellectuals and intelligentsia. In large part, this is the key to decoding Althusser's version of "structuralism" in which the structure of the scientific "problematic" "speaks" the scientist—i.e., shapes or "structures" him.

44. This problem is discussed at length in "Two Marxisms," in A.W. Gouldner, *For Sociology, op.cit.*

45. Nomad, *op.cit.*, p. 99. The American scholar most influenced by Machajski was H.D. Lasswell. See Lasswell, *op.cit.*, p. 28. Lasswell ahs also spoken of the "Permanent Revolution of the Modernizing Intellectuals," *ibid.*, p. 80. Lasswell's theory, however, lacks a *mechanism* for this revolution. He cannot account for the alienation of intellectuals and intelligentsia from the *status quo* of advanced industrial societies. At the same time, however, Lasswell is clearly not committed to Machajski's economic determinism. But this only intensifies the problem of the mechanism. His implication seems to be that intellectuals and intelligentsia become functionally more important in advanced societies and, *therefore*, acquire power. But that, of course, omits any consideration of their *revolutionary* role and fails to account for their alienation. Indeed, it would seem to preclude such alienation. Like Machajski, Lasswell often profoundly overestimates the autonomy of intellectuals and intelligentsia. His most basic problem, however, is that he lacks a theory of these strata. See also, M. Nomad, *Rebels and Renegades* (New York, 1932). Nomad cites Machajski's original Polish publications. Selections from Machajski can also be found in English translation in V.F. Calverton, *The Making of Society* (New York, 1937).

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in fact law-abiding progressive parties advocating political and social reforms, but no longer revolutionary organizations..." is also compatible with Leninism. This would be borne in on Lenin especially when most social democratic parties in West Europe voted the war budgets of their respective governments during World War I. Machajski further contended that this would also be the direction taken by *socialist* parties in Russia, as soon as they were legalized, a conclusion again essentially consistent with Lenin's own dour judgment on them.

Machajski and Lenin diverge, however, at the following point: Machajski believed that "this evolution towards respectability, and away from anti-capitalist revolution, was due to the fact that the policies of these socialist parties were determined not by their working class rank-and-file following, but by the interests of the new middle class of intellectual workers (including self-educated ex-workers) who were ready to make peace with capitalism, provided the latter...offered them an opportunity of lucrative employment either in the labor movement or in various cultural, economic and political institutions." Lenin would agree that this is in fact the normal impulse of most "bourgeois" intellectuals, and perhaps even of most "socialist" intellectuals; but Lenin would not agree that this was true of *Bolshevik* intellectuals who had placed themselves under the discipline of the vanguard party. This disagreement, however, does not entail different estimates of the accomodative dispositions of intellectuals. Indeed, Lenin's whole concept of the vanguard party may be understood as a polemical response to that very disposition. We must premise this to understand why Lenin makes a special point of insisting, in the critical debate against Martov, that "even" intellectuals should be subject to the discipline of party units. The central code of the vanguard structure implies that the organization requires intellectuals, but that it also *distrusts* them and seeks mechanisms to control them. It is in this conjunction, the need for and distrust of intellectuals, that is one main source of the authoritarian (democratic centralist) structure of the "vanguard" organization. A second major source of that structural form is distrust of the theoretical competence of the *workers* themselves.[46] Thus, the Leninist code of the vanguard structure is grounded tacitly in a sociological diagnosis of intellectuals that is not far different from Machajski's.

The point at which Lenin and Machajski diverge most, at the level of manifest doctrine, is the latter's express contention that "this new middle class of intellectual workers was a rising privileged stratum, fighting for a place in the sun against the old privileged classes, the landed owners and capitalists.

46. Given such distrust of the imprinted proletariat, *and* of imprinting theorists or intellectuals, who then can be trusted to be custodian of the revolution? This is the "mother's milk" of Stalinist paranoia, which subsequently has no trouble at all in finding countless, *thoroughly realistic* justifications for seeing enemies on all sides. What pushes political realism about external enemies over the edge into political paranoia is precisely a suspicion of those on whom reliance *must* be placed—the (realistic) fear of the historical "untrustworthiness" of workers and of intellectuals.

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Higher education was their specific 'capital'—the source of their actual or potential higher incomes. Political democracy was the first, and government ownership of industries the next step to their domination. To achieve these objects they needed the support of the manual workers.... The socialism to which the socialist parties really aspired was a hierarchical system under which...the private capitalists having yielded place to office-holders, managers and engineers, whose salaries would be much higher than the wages paid for manual labor, and who henceforth would constitute the new and only ruling class..."[47] Machajski's work, then, prophesies the rise of a "new class:" "the workers will not have their 'workers government' even after the capitalists have disappeared. As long as the working class is condemned to ignorance, the intelligentsia will rule through the workers' deputies."[48]

The doctrine most consistent with this prediction was Trotsky's views on the bureaucratic deformation of the Soviet state—although Trotsky was at pains to deny Machajski's thesis that the bureaucracy was a new, exploiting economic "class." Trotsky's diagnosis of the Soviet system—far more sociologically realistic than most of his political adversaries—was greatly handicapped by its lack of a systematic theory of the intelligentsia and of intellectuals. Committed to the classical Marxist view that sees power grounded primarily in *property*, and powerlessness in propertylessness, Trotsky's theory fails to note the actual groundings of this new elite's power in the *symbol* systems and culture it controls; it underestimates the extent to which the possession of culture and elaborated language variants are sources of differential social privilege.

As Basil Bernstein remarks, "It is not only capital, in the strict economic sense, which is subject to appropriation, manipulation and exploitation, but also cultural capital in the form of symbolic systems through which man can

47. Nomad, *Aspects of Revolt, op.cit.*, p. 100.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 115. Despite my extensive references to it here, it should be noted at once that the Machajski thesis concerning the intellectuals is profoundly limited. First, Machajski's view of intellectuals underestimates their capacity for radicalization and militancy, in part because it chunks together the more accommodative intelligentsia with the more critical intellectuals, thus underestimating the *contradictory* consequences that modern public education has for the existing system of social stratification. Secondly, Machajski's thesis overestimates the political autonomy of intellectuals because, in seeing them only as an exploitative elite "using" the proletariat and peasantry, it ignores the fact that such intellectuals *need* these other classes, even if only for their own political ambitions; to win and hold other classes to an alliance they must be open to their historical needs and possibilities. This openness to the historical requirements of *other* classes limits both the rationality and, also, the elitism of the intellectuals and intelligentsia. A third problem with the Machajski thesis is its crude economic determinism that systematically underestimates the force of intellectuals' *ideal* interests and one-sidedly dwells upon their venal, material interests. This is a petty-bourgeois element which premises that "money is the root of all evil" and that the worst people are those who betray their ideals. It was a pre-Freudian and pre-Nazi conception of evil. Machajski never really weighed the possibility that intellectuals are "dangerous" not so much when they are corrupt as when they become obsessed with purity. He never weighed the possibility that the worst people may be those who would never consider settling for less than their highest ideals.

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extend and change the boundaries of his own experience."[49] Among the central institutions for the reproduction of class systems and class privileges are what Bernstein calls the institutions of visible and "invisible" *education*, precisely because they teach coding and de-coding processes, and the codes to be used. I would stress that the effects of such education are *contradictory*, only *partly reproducing* class privileged but, *also*, creating tensions and strains that *undermine* it-grounding a *critique* of *traditional* class privileges, while also becoming the cultural grounding of a *new* elite. Such a perspective would appear to be particularly fruitful with regard to an understanding of seemingly paradoxical developments in the Soviet Union. Here what is needed is a theory that focuses on the social character of intellectuals and intelligentsia as involved in the domination of Soviet society *and* in the *resistance* to that domination. Such a theory would indicate how power and influence inhere in differential access to culture and language; clarify the special value *and* special *costs* of intellectuals' speech variants; and be sensitive to the *ambiguous* character of these strata as being both emancipatory *and* elitist. It would focus on how education, "visible" and "invisible," reproduces a system of elite control while also leading to a critique of it. Such a theory can fill certain traditional Marxist lacunae and show how Marxism itself is, in part, a theory of "*invisible* pedagogy," in that the role of the intelligentsia, as the educator of the "historical agent," is systematically repressed. To that extent, a *hierarchical* relationship between the teaching-intellectuals and the taught-proletarian (or other) historical agent, is both reproduced *and* made latent by Marxism, thereby limiting the rationality and reflexivity of all groups involved.

My own standpoint is not at all a "conspiracy" theory. Intellectuals do not speak on behalf of equality in order to manipulate the proletariat, or other "historical agents," as allies in the intellectuals' drive for power. This is not so for several reasons: First, because intellectuals do not retain power long after the revolution succeeds. They usually lose to the *intelligentsia* of political and industrial managers—to the technologists of communication, administration and violence—who inherit the revolution. Secondly, intellectuals do not define their own role and their relationship to the under-classes in a manipulative manner. Revolutionary intellectuals do not see themselves as manipulating other classes *in order to* come to power, but largely feel themselves to be the selfless agents of a kind of historical justice and rationality. Such power as they achieve is not intended by them to produce personal advantages for themselves, although it does. And third, it is neither possible for them to win power, nor to rule once power is won, without an

49. In T.A. Seboek, *op.cit.*, p. 1547. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi similarly holds that a ruling class is "the class which possesses control over the emission and circulation of the verbal and non-verbal messages which are constitutive of a given community." A ruling class rules, says Rossi-Landi, partly by its control over the communication media, but also by determining the codes used to send messages and the mechanisms used to de-code them. *Ibid.*, p. 1972. Institutions that imprint coding and de-coding processes are, in this view, reproductive of class dominance.

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active alliance with, or the political neutrality of, some larger class; intellectuals cannot accomplish this with any stability without also attending to that other class's interests. Being more fundamentally accommodative than intellectuals, the post-revolution *intelligentsia* are more likely to be those who see the compromises and alliances that need to be made, and are more likely to make them with fewer qualms.

VIII.

In large measure, the difficult question is less, who comes to power through modern revolutions—we clearly know *who* does *not*—but another question, an evaluative question: how are those who come to power, how are the intelligentsia and intellectuals as among the new ruling classes, to be *judged*? In what terms and by what standards? I would say that they should be judged by their contribution to a more rational mode of *production*—which is not simply one that produces more and more of some good—*and* by their contribution to a more rational *understanding* of the social world.

Insofar as intellectuals and intelligentsia hold or participate in power, they must be seen for the ambiguous force they are—enhancing productivity greatly, often with the unintended effect of undermining the larger natural and social environment, and enhancing an understanding of the social world, often with the unanticipated effect of subjecting persons to control, as if they were objects. The paradox of the intellectuals and intelligentsia is that they are an elitist *and* an emancipatory stratum, resisting and subverting all social limits except those providing the political and social requirements of their own status. To have asserted, as Marxism did, that the proletariat was the decisive class for the emancipation of the modern world, has been wrong as a matter of historical fact: The class that has provided the major fighting force for the revolutions of the twentieth century has been the peasantry at least as much as—indeed, usually more than—the proletariat. In the historical succession of European class societies, the dominated under-class has *never* succeeded to power. To that degree, it would seem true that Marxism is the false consciousness of a section of the cultural bourgeoisie, the intellectuals and intelligentsia, in that it is characteristically "ideological," in Marx's sense: it hides reality by an *inversion* of it, an inversion which is used in turn to mask their own role. For it is not the proletariat who came to power under "socialism," but, first, privileged intellectuals, and, then, privileged intelligentsia.

In principle, intellectuals and intelligentsia live by a culture of discourse in which there is nothing which, at least at *some* time, they are unwilling to talk about or make problematic. Indeed, they are even willing to talk about the value of talk itself and its possible inferiority to silence or to practice. But the normal supposition of intellectuals is that talk has considerable value. This envaluing of talk by intellectuals commonly presses them to distinguish in various ways between good talk and lesser kinds, while at the same time

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insisting that all arguments have a right to be heard, considered, and answered with arguments. Commonly, then, intellectuals have been slow to kill; they have commonly felt a certain incompatibility between killing and talking, seeing each as an *alternative* to one another. Killing ends the dialogue, and the threat of violence makes it valueless. For who believes the consensus that comes out of the barrel of a gun? Thus, when the killing time comes, intellectuals are commonly at a disadvantage, for their preferred weapons are words. For that reason, my thesis about the importance of intellectuals in revolutions is not some absolute, but, rather, depends in part upon the role of violence in the politics of the situation. As violence limits talk, so too does it generate limits on the leadership of radical intellectuals. The role of intellectuals in a revolutionary movement is therefore necessarily greater *prior* to the time that the movement succeeds in capturing state power and, correspondingly, it diminishes after state power is captured and, with it, the means of violence which it now makes available to the revolution triumphant. But even in revolutionary movements still out of power, there are historically great differences in their rules concerning the use of violence. I have argued elsewhere[50] that the community of Marxist and socialist revolutionaries has tended increasingly to expand the importance of violence as an agency of historical change. Here, again, historically sensitive qualifications need to be asserted: the more revolutionary movements affirm the value and importance of violence, the more limited the leadership role available to intellectuals.[51] To that extent, there is in the modern revolutions of the Third World a latent contradiction between the intellectuals and the peasantry who have constituted the mass base of these revolutions, precisely because peasants have constituted the main fighting cadres. For the peasant, the army may be a way *out* of village misery and a way *up* in the larger social world. To the extent, then, that the peasantry come to identify the army as their own instrumentality, and indeed, as their community, to that extent there is a growing likelihood of a strain between peasantry and intellectuals. It may be that this contradiction is part of the infra-structure of the Cultural Revolutions in China.

Nevertheless, intellectuals can kill; indeed, no little part of modern "terrorism" is done by middle class intellectuals. But commonly, intellectuals require justification in terms of high values before they can kill willingly; they need to see themselves as the hammer of historical justice, as the impersonal instrument of higher rationality, or they need to work themselves up into a berserk rage, before they can threaten violence, terrorize, and kill. All of these states of consciousness are dissonant with the culture of reflexive

50. See A.W. Gouldner, "The Metaphoricality of Marxism and the Context-Freeing Grammar of Socialism," *Theory and Society*, Winter, 1974, pp. 391ff.

51. Let me stress that, in counterposing talking and violence, I am making no judgment on the truth of the conventional claim that violence is inherently irrational or non-rational or injurious to rationality. I happen *not* to believe that, but this is entirely another matter, too complicated by far for discussion here.

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discourse to which intellectuals are normally committed. To that extent, then, intellectuals are or would be a relatively unique ruling class, perhaps more loathe to kill than any ever was. Their more Orwellian instrument is the manipulation of an invisible pedagogy. While bad enough, this still leaves persons alive, still capable of resisting, changing, and of fighting another day.

There is another way in which intellectuals and intelligentsia differ as a possible ruling elite, and this involves the special grounding of their privilege in culture and language. Certain *cultural* goods have the unique character of not being limited in supply, in the same way that "economic" goods are. This means that one need not play a zero sum game in allocating cultural goods: One person's or group's ability to "possess" culture, or to speak an advantageous linguistic variant, does not *per force* constitute a "possession" of it that excludes others' enjoyment and use of the same culture and language. Intellectuals thus differ from other classes in that they seek, in some part, to foster the diffusion of cultural goods they believe of worth and on which their own elite privileges rest. This is another basic contradiction of the intellectuals. Their relationship to other social classes is more like the relationship between teachers and students than capitalist and proletariat. Which is not to say that this relationship of tutelage is devoid of tensions, but that these *need not* be laden with necessary and great conflict. It is a contradiction, but not an antagonistic contradiction.

What is needed are social mechanisms and a theoretical understanding that can ensure that this tutelage does not stretch out any longer than it must; that those in control of culture do not impair the autonomy of others as the price of tutelage; that the relationship of dominance be out in the open, visible to public inspection and criticism, rather than hidden as an "invisible pedagogy" beyond discussion. Critical theory aims at transforming society into self-governing persons who value and who have a large variety of speech variants; who understand each variant as suitable for different purposes and for different but, quite possibly, equal kinds of lives; and who work toward a free community of multiple language speakers who have neither the need nor the power to impose themselves or their culture on others. It would be an essential function of a proper critical theory of intellectuals and intelligentsia —revolutionary or otherwise—to make this invisible pedagogy a more visible one, thereby inhibiting the manipulation of the proletariat. An object of such a critical theory would be to de-mystify the role of intellectuals and intelligentsia, while giving no encouragement to anti-intellectualism.

In exalted moments, reflective theorists, unreflectively bent on solving the problem of "the one and the many" in their own image, think to confer a boon on mankind by raising it to their own lofty level. So they set forth projects which sometimes seem to imply that the emancipation of society means that *all* will be helped to become *intellectuals or intelligentsia*, or to speak more "rationally," as if there were no higher estate they could think of conferring on humanity. But this *noblesse oblige* should be suspect, for it

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implies the perpetuation of a noblesse who will continue to "oblige." It implies also that the "good" is a *uni*-dimensional, solely *cognitive* good, one already in the possession of intellectuals; it implies an overestimation of mind, of words, of consciousness, of theory—an overestimation of all the things in which intellectuals are already competent—and it implies that they are immodestly setting forth their own lives as the standard for all others. This betrays the continuing presence of something that is the very opposite of the liberation supposedly being offered: the disguised will of some intellectuals to *dominate*, to impose their own values and their own form of life on others. However, this is not to say that the standpoint offered here declares all languages and codes equal, and this for two reasons: One is that one speech variant may be *better* than another in a particular situation, while in a different situation, this superiority may not hold, which is why elaborated linguistic codes are not simply "better" than restricted variants. Yet, any view that affirms an absolute equality of languages is simply a dogmatic linguistic liberalism. This dogmatic liberalism is to be rejected simply for its dogmatism; its liberality ought not to suffice to win adherence, and *evidence* of this equality or inequality should be demanded.

The expectation ought to be: each linguistic variant solves certain problems *and* exacts certain costs in certain specifiable situations; the therapy for such costs may take the direction, not of switching to *one* linguistic variant or code presumably superior in all situations. The idea of one therapy that is successful for all pathologies is known by the ancient and dishonorable name of "panacea." Rather, the strategy should be to work toward enlarging and diversifying linguistic repertoires; strengthening the capacity for switching from one to another; and for assaying their usefulness in different situations. This is, of course, quite a different strategy than the supposition that one variant, say, an "elaborated" linguistic variant, will solve the problems of all men at all times and places. If one needs to condense our strategy sloganistically, it would *not* be that "All men should become intellectuals." It would be, rather, that "All men should become *upper* class," precisely in their having available a larger speech repertoire.[52] The larger the speech repertoire available to all men, the greater the likelihood that all men will become brothers.

52. Cf. J.A. Fishman: "...in relatively open societies the middle and upper middle classes have larger repertoires in language and social behaviour than do the lower classes." In Seboek, *op.cit.*, p. 1686.

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Introduction to Korsch

by Nick Xenos

In the critical appropriation of Western Marxism carried out in North America during the past decade, the work of Karl Korsch has been conspicuously neglected. While the writings of Georg Lukács, the Frankfurt School, and various French developments have received a great deal of attention in the form of articles, monographic studies, and translations, Korsch is frequently referred to but seldom studied in depth. Although some of Korsch's many political essays are beginning to be translated into English,[1] there is still a lack of serious critical attention to his work as a whole.

Korsch has not, however, been ignored in other languages. His thought forms part of the heritage of the German New Left, where his works were reprinted in the middle and late 1960's, and which are still coming out. The student journal at Göttingen University, *Politikon*, published a special issue devoted to Korsch (Sept.-Oct. 1971), as did *Alternative* (April 1965), and a collection of critical essays was published in 1973 under the title *Ueber Karl Korsch: Jahrbuch Arbeiterbewegung.*[2] In addition, his work is discussed in numerous scattered articles and books. More surprisingly, perhaps, Korsch's work has received widespread attention in Italy, where Gian Enrico Rusconi has edited several anthologies of Korsch's political writings.[3] Similar anthologies have recently appeared in French and Spanish.[4]

At least a part of the reason for the absence of critical studies of Korsch in English revolves around Korsch's relationship to the work of Georg Lukács, and especially the latter's *History and Class Consciousness*. Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy*, his most influential book originally appeared a few months after

1. Cf. "The Crisis of Marxism," *New German Critique* 3 (Fall 1974) and "What Is Socialization?" *New German Critique* 6 (Fall 1975). In addition, the journals of the Council Communists, *Council Correspondence, Living Marxism,* and *New Essays*, which contain many articles written by Korsch in English, have been reissued by Greenwood Reprint Corp., Westport, Connecticut. Other works by Korsch available in English are: *Marxism and Philosophy* (London, 1970); *Karl Marx* (New York, 1973); *Three Essays on Marxism* (New York, 1972).

2. Published by Fischer Taschenbuch, Frankfurt. Korsch's work available in German includes: *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Frankfurt, 1966); *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte* (Frankfurt, 1968); *Schriften zur Sozialisierung* (Frankfurt, 1969); *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung und andere Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1971); *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Frankfurt, 1974); and *Politische Texte* (Frankfurt, 1974).

3. Cf. the article "Korsch's Reception in Italy," by Giacomo Marramao in this issue, as well as the articles by Ceppa, Rusconi, and Cerutti. Cf. also Karl Korsch, *Dialettica e Scienza nel Marxismo* (Bari, 1974); Karl Korsch, *Consigli di Fabrica e Socializzione* (Bari, 1973); another anthology of Korsch's political writings—edited also by Rusconi—is presently in press.

4. I.e., *Karl Korsch: Marxisme et countrerevolution*, edited by Serge Bricianer (Paris, 1974); *Karl Korsch o el Nacimiento de una Nueva Epoca*, edited by Eduardo Subirats (Barcelona, 1973). The latter is reviewed in Paul Piccone's essay, "Korsch in Spain," *New German Critique* 6 (Fall 1975).

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Lukács' book in 1923. Similarly, English translations of the two books appeared almost simultaneously in 1970 (*Marxism and Philosophy*) and 1971 (*History and Class Consciousness*). On both occasions, Korsch's book was assimilated with Lukács', and as a consequence of the greater scope and theoretical sophistication of the latter, *Marxism and Philosophy* was taken to be clarification of certain points treated in greater detail in *History and Class Consciousness*. As a result, the similarity of the problematics of the two authors was established, while the significant theoretical differences between their works were largely ignored or minimized.[5] Subsequently, much further work has been done on Lukács, while Korsch has been neglected, obscuring his independent contributions to social theory, as well as the consistent and integrated character of his work as a whole.

Both Lukács and Korsch intended their works of 1923 to contribute to a "restoration" of revolutionary Marxism following the period of Second International reformism. They sought the foundations of this revitalized Marxism in the philosophical structure of Marx's work, and in the relationship between that structure and German Idealism. They also sought to understand the relationship between the abandonment and reappropriation of Marx's philosophical categories and changes in social relations engendered by the consolidation of capitalism in Europe, together with new forms of socialist organization which they understood as represented by the Russian Revolution. Within this shared problematic, however, Lukács and Korsch developed their theories in very different directions. The difficulties and consequences of Lukács' theories of reification and of subject-object identity have been adequately treated,[6] whereas the equally problematical consequences of Korsch's historicism have hitherto not been developed, at least in English. As the articles which follow indicate, these consequences are disasterous for Korsch's theory as a whole.[7]

Whereas Lukács introduced a concept of totality which comprises the whole of history and is mediated in both time and space, and which has the proletariat as both the subject and object of that historical totality, an identity which allows for the emergence of the party as the bearer of historical truth, Korsch's concept of totality is open-ended because it is immediate. Truth, for Korsch, rests solely in actuality; theory and practice form an inseparable unity, and any theory which is not an expression of that reality is ideology, and hence "false." This perspective allowed Korsch to develop significant critiques of social

5. Cf. Russell Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism: The Politics of Philosophy from Lukács to the Frankfurt School," *Telos* 10 (Winter 1971); Paul Breines, "Praxis and its Theorists: The Impact of Lukács and Korsch in the 1920s," *Telos* 11 (Spring 1972). The most significant attempt to separate Korsch and Lukács was made by Giuseppe Vacca in his *Lukâcs o Korsch?* (Bari, 1969). Cf. the review of this book by Paul Breines, *Telos* 5 (Spring 1970).

6. Cf. the articles in the special issues on Lukacs of *Telos* (10 and 11); and Furio Cerutti's article in this issue.

7. The best critique of Korsch to have appeared in English up to now is Mihaly Vajda's "Karl Korsch's 'Marxism and Philosophy'," in *The Unknown Dimension*, edited by Dick Howard and Karl Klare (New York, 1972).

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democratic theory as expressed by Kautsky, of Russian Marxism in the persons of Lenin and Stalin, and of Marxism itself. Korsch's "Ten Theses on Marxism Today" (1950), also known as the "Zurich Theses," is an expression of the last enterprise. But Korsch's reduction ultimately leaves his theory without any anticipatory element, an absence which he vainly sought to avoid by attempting to ground his work in the experiences of the factory councils. Thus, the significance of Korsch's work is essentially critical and negative as his social theory is fundamentally contentless.

Korsch's theory radically exposes the strengths and weaknesses of a thorough-going historicism. In this respect, it can be seen as complementary to Lukács' work. Together they define the parameters within which the problems which they addressed must be confronted. Much of subsequent radical social theory can be located within these extremes. But new problems have also arisen together with changed historical circumstances, and Korsch's work will serve as a check against carrying over obsolete theoretical constructs. A critical appropriation of his work can only help us to situate Marxist theory of the inter-war years and to articulate the changed historical present. Only on this basis can we determine the inherited and new needs which a radical social theory must meet.

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Ten Theses on Marxism Today (1950)*

by Karl Korsch

1. It no longer makes sense to ask to what extent the teaching of Marx and Engels is, today, theoretically acceptable and practically applicable.

2. Today, all attempts to re-establish the Marxist doctrine as a whole in its original function as a theory of the working class's social revolution are reactionary utopias.

3. Though basically ambiguous, there are, however, important aspects of Marxian teaching which in their changing function and applying to different locations have until today retained their effectiveness. Also, the impetus generated by the praxis of the old Marxist labor movement has been presently incorporated into the practical struggles of peoples and classes.

4. The first step in re-establishing a revolutionary theory and practice consists in breaking with that Marxism which claims to monopolize revolutionary initiative as well as theoretical and practical direction.

5. Marx is today only one among the numerous precursors, founders and developers of the socialist movement of the working class. No less important are the so-called Utopian Socialists from Thomas More to the present. No less important are the great rivals of Marx, such as Blanqui, and his sworn enemies, such as Proudhon and Bakunin. No less important, in the final result, are the more recent developments such as German revisionism, French syndicalism, and Russian Bolshevism.

6. The following points are particularly critical for Marxism: (a) its dependence on the underdeveloped economic and political conditions in Germany and all the other countries of central and eastern Europe where it was to have political relevance; (b) its unconditional adherence to the political forms of the bourgeois revolution; (c) the unconditional acceptance of the advanced economic conditions of England as a model for the future development of all countries and as objective preconditions for the transition to socialism; to which one should add; (d) the consequences of its repeated desperate and contradictory attempts to break out of these conditions.

*Translated by Andrew Giles-Peters.

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7. The results of these conditions are: (a) the overestimation of the state as the decisive instrument of social revolution; (b) the mystical identification of the development of the capitalist economy with the social revolution of the working class; (c) the subsequent ambiguous development of this first form of the Marxian theory of revolution by the artificial grafting onto it of a theory of the communist revolution in two phases; this theory, directed on the one hand against Blanqui, and on the other against Bakunin, whisks away from the present movement the real emancipation of the working class and puts it back into the indefinite future.

8. This is the point for insertion of the Leninist or Bolshevik development; and it is in this new form that Marxism has been transferred to Russia and Asia. Thereby Marxism has been changed; from a revolutionary theory it has become an ideology. This ideology could be and has been used for a variety of different goals.

9. It is from this viewpoint that one comes to judge in a critical spirit the two Russian revolutions of 1917 and 1928, and it is from this viewpoint that one must determine the functions fulfilled by Marxism today in Asia and on a world scale.

10. The control of the workers over the production of their own lives will not come from their occupying the positions, on the international and world markets, abandoned by the self-destroying and so-called free competition of the monopolistic owners of the means of production. This control can only result from a planned intervention by all the classes today excluded from it into a production which today is already tending in every way to be regulated in a monopolistic and planned fashion.

Toward a Marxist Theory of Value
by Agnes Heller

This work by one of Lukacs' closest students remains one of the few available in English to give a rigorous account of the development of Marx's ethical theory. Heller offers a clear analysis which does not compromise on content, tracing the historical roots of Marx's ethical theory back to its philosophical origins in classical Greek philosophy. Translated with an Introduction by Andrew Arato. 76 pages. Available in paper only. $1.50.

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Korsch's 'Road to Marx'

by Paul Breines

The two men who initiated what came to be called Western Marxism were both bankers' sons. It is a nice coincidence, but it entails a contrast, by way of reminder that Georg Lukács' and Karl Korsch's closely linked reconstructions of Marxian theory in the early 1920s were far from identical. Jozsef von Lukács, father of the author of *History and Class Consciousness*, was the managing director of the Budapest *Kreditanstalt*, Hungary's largest bank, and thus a member of Central Europe's financial aristocracy. He had received the noble title—the 'von' in German—in recognition of his services to the Austro-Hungarian crown. His son, on becoming a communist in 1919, would drop the 'von' from his name, but would produce a Marxian theory with a grandeur and bold sweep befitting his social roots. In contrast, Korsch's father, who came from a family of small farmers, rose quietly through the ranks of provincial German civil service to an officership in a Thuringian branch bank. In the very best of his times, he was a man of modest means. When his son became a Marxist in 1920, frugality and an emphasis on the practical would characterize his theoretical labors.[1]

Other contrasts within similarities to Lukács will be touched on in the following pages which, however, have a more specific and limited aim: namely, tracing the development of Karl Korsch's work *up to 1918*. Recent research has begun to delineate the differences between the fraternal texts, *History and Class Consciousness* and *Marxism and Philosophy*, and between their authors' subsequent careers.[2] So, for example, it is reasonably well established that, while Lukács and Korsch both retrieved the Hegelian aspect of Marx's thought, and agreed that this was central to the revolutionary content of Marxism, only Lukács glimpsed the dialectic of alienation. And as to their political careers, it is perfectly clear at least that, whereas Lukács made his strange peace with Stalinism by the late 1920s, Korsch took u the cudgels of anti-Stalinism, soon turning them on Leninism as well.

1. This contrast between Korsch and Lukács parallels the differences between Bertolt Brecht and Lukács. In this connection, see Eugene Lunn's fine discussion in "Marxism and Art in the Era of Stalin and Hitler: A Comparison of Brecht and Lukács," *New German Critique* 3 (Fall 1974), esp. pp. 16-21. Biographical material on Korsch in English can be found in the following sources: Fred Halliday, "Karl Korsch: An Introduction," *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (New York, 1970), pp. 7-26; Hedda Korsch, "Memories of Karl Korsch" [Interview by Fred Halliday], *New Left Review* 76 (November-December, 1972), pp. 35-45; Paul Mattick, "The Marxism of Karl Korsch," *Survey* 53 (October, 1964), pp. 86-97. In addition, I had the opportunity to interview Korsch's widow, Dr. Hedda Korsch, in April 1969. References to *this* interview are referred to below as "Interview with Hedda Korsch" and should *not* be confused with the interview published in *New Left Review*.

2. See among other works: Furio Cerutti, "Hegel, Lukács and Korsch," published in this issue of *Telos*; Gian Enrico Rusconi, *La Teoria Critica della Società* (Bologna, 1968), *passim*; Giuseppe Vacca, *Lukács o Korsch?* (Bari, 1969), *passim*; and Mihaly Vajda, "Karl Korsch's 'Marxism and Philosophy'," in Dick Howard and Karl E. Klare, eds., *The Unknown Dimension: European Marxism Since Lenin* (New York, 1972), pp. 131-146.

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While not pursuing these important theoretical and political themes, the present essay may help to illuminate them in so far as Korsch's positions from 1918 onward have part of their source in the preceding phases of his career. This goes without saying, yet by comparison to the extensive attention that has been paid to the "young Lukács," Korsch's early period—his "road to Marx"—has virtually been ignored.[3] In fact, this is hardly surprising. For one thing, Korsch's *oeuvre* prior to his becoming a Marxist in 1920, is simply not that rich a lode, neither quantitatively nor qualitatively. It contains some two dozen essays of political and cultural commentary, and an academic press publication of Korsch's dissertation in jurisprudence: in other words, nothing of depth and intensity comparable to Lukács' early *Soul and Forms* or *Theory of the Novel*, which are significant works quite apart from their place in their author's subsequent development.

For another thing, Korsch as a young man was already a socialist and a democrat, and, as will be shown shortly, his transition to Marxism and communism in 1920 was more logical than Lukács' conversion, and thus attracted less attention, then and later. Furthermore in this connection, the later Korsch wrote next to nothing in the way of retrospective analysis of his own early work, characteristically moving with little fanfare through the several phases of his career as a Marxist. Lukács, on the other hand, emerged as the most active critic of the "young Lukács," producing not a few works aimed at correcting what he came to view as his early heresies. Subsequent commentators have in the main followed these leads—not mistakenly, but with the result that rather little light has been shed on the "young Korsch." The list of reasons for this incomplete picture can be extended, but it will be more useful to turn directly to trying to fill in at least some of the blank spots.[4]

Student Years: A Rationalist Radical amidst Romantic Revolt

In 1924 at the Fifth World Congress of the Communist International, Korsch, Lukács and others came under attack from the leadership for their alleged ultra-leftism and philosophical revisionism. In the course of his denunciation, Zinoviev labeled them "Professors"—a demagogic remark which, however, was partially true: Korsch, at least, was a professor of law at the Jena University, a position he had gotten the preceding year and would retain, often with difficulty, until the eve of the Nazi takeover.[5] In fact, the background against which Korsch's figure first comes into focus is an academic

3. Brief sketches of Korsch's 'road to Marx' can be found in the essays by Halliday and Mattick cited above. More recent and far more substantial treatment is in Michael Buckmiller, "Marxismus als Realität. Zur Rekonstruktion der theoretischen und politischen Entwicklung Karl Korschs," in *Ueber Karl Korsch*, ed. Claudio Pozzoli (Frankfurt, 1973).

4. In connection with the question of why Lukács has had a relative monopoly of attention, it should be noted that this is at least partly due to his "incorrect" political decision to remain in the communist movement after 1926. Korsch's departure-expulsion from the Communist Party of Germany in that year has the merit, in our view, of having been the better choice—but not the most interesting one. In other words, for attracting attention, the sinner has it all over the saint.

5. Lukács was not a professor.

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one: the same Jena University, from which he earned his doctorate of jurisprudence *summa cum laude* in 1910 with a dissertation, "The Burden of Proof in Cases of Qualified Confession: A Contribution to Theories of Law and Behavior."[6] He was twenty-four years old.

Already a socialist, Korsch had no political party affiliations, specifically, no ties to the youth and student sections of the Social Democratic Party of Germany. Prior to and during his studies at Jena (he had attended the Munich, Berlin and Geneva universities, concentrating on philosophy and history), he was, however, active in the *Freier Studenten*, the Free Student movement, which opposed both the nationalistic fraternities and the authoritarianism of the German school system. Among other things, he worked toward the establishment of programs of free legal assistance for the poor, and in general sought to bring the *Freie Studenten* into contact with working class groups. Unsuccessful efforts, these are nevertheless indicative of the democratic and egalitarian values which were the initial and sustaining heart of Korsch's outlook.[7] At one of the talks he often presented on behalf of *Freier Studenten* causes, he met Hedda Gagliardi in 1908, and five years later they were married. In Germany in the 1920s and then during their American emigration, Hedda Korsch emerged as a significant figure in her own right in the area of child development and education. The two were *compagnons de route* until Karl Korsch's death in Belmont, Massachusetts in 1961.[8]

Notably, Korsch stood apart from the more effusively romantic tendencies of the student and youth movements of pre-war Germany. Not unlike some recent developments in the United States, the cultural crisis of Wilhelmine Germany unleashed numerous cults of youth as the embodiment of eros, spontaneity, authenticity and community in the face of a sclerotic bourgeois civilization. The hikers of the *Wandervogel*, the Free School Communities initiated by Gustav Wyneken, and such novels as Hermann Hesse's *Demian* and Robert Musil's *Young Torless* are among the better-known expression of these efforts. While Korsch shared many of their criticisms of the established order, his distinctly neo-Enlightenment cast of mind was foreign to the neo-Romantic youth metaphysics. Celebrating the Idea of Youth was in his view a sign of the

6. The German title is *Die Beweislast beim qualifizierten Geständnis: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Rechts- und Tatfrage* (Bonn, 1911).

7. Hedda Korsch Interview.

8. Several essays by Hedda Korsch, attempting to formulate a communist position on early childhood education and related questions, can be found in the 1924 and 1925 volumes of *Die Internationale*, the theoretical organ of the Communist Party of Germany. Karl Korsch was its editor at that time. Later, during their emigration in the United States, Hedda Korsch taught education courses at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. While the theme cannot be pursued further here, we note that there seem to be connections between an underlying interest in education, especially at the earliest levels, and a certain type of politics. Not a few German so-called "ultra-lefts" had backgrounds and-or professional experience in childhood education, for example, Alice Rühle, the wife of Otto Rühle. In the 1940s and after, Karl Korsch and Hedda Korsch were associated with ultra-left or Council Communist groups. The basis for such connections is probably the idea of education for revolution as distinct from the idea of management of revolution.

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movement's inability to engage in a public discourse "beyond its own narrow circles."[9]

Here we already glimpse what would prove to be characteristically Korschian motifs: the practical thrust of his thinking and his hostility to hermetic theorizing. Moreover, his interest in the young generation was not a passing fancy confined to his own student years, but a more enduring interest based on the idea that the young are, indeed, less fettered than the old by the existing institutions and patterns. This is, of course, an Enlightenment as well as a Romantic notion, and Korsch would return to it numerous times in his career. In this connection, decades later, Bertolt Brecht, by then a close friend, would remark that Korsch "firmly believes in the new. Thus he loves the youth, who for me are only immature."[10] Brecht, as is well-known, was something of an expert on immaturity.

The Fabian Years: Activist Gradualism versus Passive Marxism

The most important and interesting phase of Korsch's pre-Marxian work is his association in London with the Fabian Society. Late in 1911 the Jena law faculty provided him with a stipend for a trip to study English law and to translate certain texts into German.[11] He would remain until the outbreak of World War One. In view of his intellectual and political orientation, it is not surprising that once in the London area, Korsch was soon in touch with the Fabians. He thus became one of a small but significant number of German socialists—Eduard Bernstein being the best-known—who "during their sojourn in England imbibed Fabianism and spread it in Germany."[12]

A Korsch-Bernstein comparison is useful here. The latter had gone to England in the early 1890s as a Marxist and member of the working class Social Democratic Party of Germany. Initially, he eschewed contact with the Fabian Society because of its middle-class character, its reputation as a parlor-socialist clique, and the already infamous narcissism of some of its leading members.[13] This hostility was not long in dissolving, however, and Bernstein's subsequently close association with Fabianism was a strong ingredient in his positivist and gradualist revisions of Marxism. Korsch, on the other hand, an independent socialist intellectual—and not a Marxist—was immediately attracted to the Fabian ambience. In it he found what he had been pressing toward on his own:

9. "Jugendbewegung und Jugendpolitik," *Die Tat* IX:12 (March, 1918), p. 1052. Although written near the end of the war, the article makes clear that it expressed views Korsch held in the pre-war years as well.

10. Bertolt Brecht, "Ueber meinen Lehrer" (no date given) in Bertolt Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 20 (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 65. This little essay partly expresses Brecht's great admiration for his teacher, Korsch. It is also filled with not so felicitious projections onto Korsch of Brecht's own guilty conscience as an intellectual in the "workers' movement," as for example when he says "Korsch is only a guest at the house of the proletariat. His bags are packed and he is always ready to leave."

11. Hedda Korsch Interview.

12. Max Beer, cited in Peter Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (New York, 1962), pp. 107-108.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

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a non-dogmatic and vigorously practical approach to socialist reform centering around a program of public education and enlightenment.

The main point in this connection, however, is that Korsch and Bernstein drew a *common* shoot from Fabianism, but nurtured it differently: the activism and philosophically eclectic anti-determinism of the Fabian perspective. In Bernstein's hands this blossomed into a rejection of the Marxian theories of crisis and revolution, and an affirmation of piecemeal evolution toward socialism. For Korsch, in contrast, it would serve as the beginning of his later revitalization of the "subjective factor" *within* Marxism.

A clue to the meaning of Korsch's stay in England appears in the contrasting titles of the German journals in which he published—as far as I know, he did not publish anything in English at the time. His several earliest essays (1911-1912) were published in a small periodical devoted to university affairs, *Akademische Rundschau* (Academic Review).[14] Beginning with his arrival in London and extending through the war years into early 1919, by which time he had returned to Germany, virtually all of Korsch's essays were published in the widely-read journal of culture and "cultural politics:" *Did Tat* (Action, or The Deed). The shift reflected here—from academia to action—is not to be taken literally, but as indicative of the direction in which Korsch sought to move.

His association with *Die Tat* is intriguing. It began almost accidentally when, just prior to his departure for England, Korsch met Eugen Diederichs, the journal's editor and publisher, who paid well for articles and invited Korsch to submit commentaries on the English scene. *Die Tat* did, however, have close ties to the student and youth movements whose theorists, among them, Hans Blüher, Gustav Wyneken, the young Alfred Kurella and even Walter Benjamin, contributed to its pages. Presumably, Diederichs knew of Korsch's work with the *Freier Studenten*. On the other hand, the latter was something of a dark sheep in this company, for *Die Tat* was also a leading organ of neo-romantic cultural politics, often of its more irrationalist expressions. Diederichs, who as editor did open his pages to a wider range of opinion, nevertheless "considered himself the leading publisher of the New Romanticism, which he traced back to Nietzsche and [Paul] Lagarde."[15] As we shall see momentarily, Korsch's articles would be poles apart from the anti-scientific, anti-rationalist and anti-industrial thrust of the journal as a whole.

There is, on the other hand, another current in which Korsch and *Die Tat* stood together: namely, what the German philosopher, Theodor Lessing, in 1908 called "this new cultural movement—Activism [*Aktivismus*]."[16] A broad,

14. The journal's full title was *Akademische Rundschau. Zeitschrift für das gesamte Hochschulwesen und die akademischen Berufstande*. Its editors were Wilhelm Baum and Friedrich Schulze.

15. Harry Pross, *Literatur und Politik. Geschichte und Programme der politisch-literarischen Zeitschriften im deutschen Sprachgebiet seit 1870* (Freiburg, 1963), p. 95. On Diederichs and his cultural-political milieu, see also George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York, 1964), pp. 52-63.

16. Theodor Lessing, "Philosophie als Tat" (1907) in his *Philosophie als Tat* (Göttingen, 1914), p. 3. In Germany, "Activism" emerged as a self-conscious tendency thanks to the efforts of

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European-wide intellectual development that emerged around the turn of the century, Activism traversed an otherwise dissonant series of philosophical, artistic and political tendencies: Expressionism, neo-Hegelianism, Philosophy of Life, Cubism, Lenin's voluntaristic theory of the vanguard party, Georges Sorel's notion of *action directe* among others. Activism's driving and unifying theme was its assertion of the creative powers of human subjectivity (consciousness, will, imagination) against a world whose objectivity and materiality appeared increasingly impenetrable and intractable.

Die Tat was part of this overall Activist current. Notably, a spate of publications bearing similar titles appeared in Germany during the pre-war years: *Die Aktion*; *Erhebung* (Rebellion); *Der Anfang* (The Beginning); *Der Aufbruch* (The Uprising)—all expressions of cultural rather than directly political criticism and revolt, but as such signalling the emergence of a new generation of anti-bourgeois bourgeois intellectuals. These titles and themes, however, referred not only to the will to action, uprisings, and new beginnings, but simultaneously to the crisis of this will as experienced by those who spoke in its name—a crisis grounded in the social isolation of the Activist intellectuals, their "free-floating" situation which confined them to the action of thought and the thought of action. Korsch's Fabianism, which centered around the idea of the will to socialism and what he called the *"Geist der Tat"* (spirit of action), was bound up with the prospects and problems of Activism. This was, moreover, the general framework within which Lukacs was working at the same time; one finds here the embryo of the parallel attempts nearly a decade later to develop a subjectivized and activized Marxism.

Mention of the ties between Korsch and Lukács provokes mention of the tensions, which in this instance serve to introduce some of the particulars of Korsch's outlook during his Fabian period. In his approach to two issues of mutual concern—culture and intellectuals—we glimpse features which are quite at odds with the characteristic tendencies of Lukács's work at the same time. To begin with, although Korsch was interested in cultural questions, they were not his main focus; more importantly, the notion of a crisis of bourgeois culture as a whole was as foreign to his thinking as it was central to Lukács'.

Writing in 1913 (from England), for example, Korsch analyzed a competition announced by a popular German weekly magazine offering a lucrative prize to the author of the best concluding chapter to an unsolved, serialized crime novel.[17] While viewing the contest as symptomatic of the

its most vigorous protagonist, the essayist, Kurt Hiller. His journal, *Das Ziel*, launched on the eve of the war, served as "Activism's" eclectic but lively organ. Korsch did not publish in it, interestingly enough, until 1924, by which time his own activism had taken a different turn. See Karl Korsch, "Der junge Marx als aktivistischer Philosoph," *Geistiger Politik:* 5th volume of *Das Ziel-Jahrbuch* (1924), pp. 41-45. On "Activism" see Wolfgang Rothe, ed., *Der Aktivismus, 1915-1920* (Munich, 1969), and especially the copius and judicious study by Lewis D. Wurgaft, *The Activist Movement: Cultural Politics in the German Left, 1914-1933* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1970).

17. "Das 1,000,000 M[ark] Preisausschrei bei der 'Zeit im Bild'," *Die Tat* 5:3 (June, 1913), pp. 321-323.

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decline in social and cultural values, he did not pursue this theme but characteristically pointed to the potentially positive role such competitions could play as a means of advancing solutions to real scientific and social problems. Specifically, he stressed their possible merits in financially assisting and bringing to public notice previously unknown intellectuals, referring by way of a model to the famous competition won by Jean-Jacques Rousseau at an earlier, more heroic stage of bourgeois society. Had such competitions remained meaningful, Korsch concluded, they would enable society to recognize the value of "free intellectual workers. In their present state, however, they are a sham. To win the money, many intelligent people will waste their time."[18]

"Intellectual workers:" Korsch did not elaborate on the term, which was in any case not confined to him at the time, but it is nevertheless suggestive of additional contrasts with Lukács' approach. When the latter addressed the question of intellectuals, he focused by and large on aesthetically and philosophically creative individuals and their tragic fate in late bourgeois society: the category of "intellectual worker," while not incompatible with his early sociology of culture, did not loom large. Thus, while too much is often made of Lukács' elitism, it is fair to say that his approach to the issue of intellectuals was less democratic than Korsch's—but probably more radical, as well.

In his 1913 essay, "The Advancement of the Intellectually Gifted," Korsch criticized both the English and German educational systems for their continued failure to develop programs capable not only of supporting and advancing the gifted students, but of doing so while democratizing schooling generally.[19] Along the same lines, he argued in "The Exam as a Political Problem" that those who claim exams are harmful to true talent overlook the ways in which creative exams can be a meaningful mechanism of insuring an equitable selection of intellectual talent.[20] In other words, Korsch's primary concern was with the specific, practical steps that could be taken to promote a democratic educational system and the broadest possible public dissemination of acquired scientific and cultural knowledge. This is some distance from Lukács' preoccupation with what he called the "Tonio Kröger problem:" the split between artist and bourgeois within creative souls.[21]

Korsch's preoccupation with intellectual workers, education, public enlightenment and so on was motivated by the problems of his own historical situation as a socialist intellectual. And it is significant that in the pre-war years he found the most adequate answers to these problems in the Fabian Society and *not* in the Social Democratyc Party of Germany (SPD). For this points to the fact that, with Lukács and for related but quite different reasons, Korsch was a critic of the then official Marxism before he became a revolutionary Marxist. His side of this story is most clearly unfolded in the two politically most

18. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
19. "Das Problem 'Aussteigen geistig Begabten'," *Die Tat* 4:11 (February, 1913), pp. 611-613.
20. "Das Examen als politischer Problem," *Die Tat* 5:8 (November, 1913), pp. 770-782.
21. See Lukács' remarks in his foreword to *Essays on Thomas Mann*, trans. Stanley Mitchell (London, 1964), p. 10.

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important essays of the London years, both published in 1912: "The Fabian Society" and "The Socialist Formula for the Organization of the Economy."[22]

Against what he deemed a fairly arid "German Marxism," Korsch spoke glowingly of the "Fabian touch" and fully shared its ideals: having overcome the "youthful anarchism" and "utopian hopes and wishes" of its early years in the 1880s, the Fabian Society's work, as he saw it, was now dominated by a "scientific spirit." Unlike the Germans who "tend to raise theory to an end in itself," the Fabians "unite the most serious theoretical requirements with an invincible inclination toward the simple and practical." Their "renowned sense of reality," their ability to show in each instance how theoretical insights are applicable to practical problems and, moreover, their ability to take direct, practical initiatives, was in Korsch's view the root of the Fabians' superiority to the German Social Democrats on the one hand, and on the other, to the academic socialists, the *Kathedersozialisten*. Never losing sight of the links "between theoretical thought and practical action," Fabians are consistently able to "take the next step and come closer to their goal...: democratic socialism; socialization of production and full democratic government."

The basic superiority of Fabian over "German Marxist" positions hinged, in Korsch's account, on the issue of determinism and (free) will. In light of the later development of his—and Lukács'—thinking, the standpoint here is intriguing. On the one hand, Korsch noted that the Fabians share with German Marxism the conviction that "political and economic socialism...comes by itself [*von selber kommt*] whether or not we as individuals endorse or oppose its development." To this, however, the Fabians "add" a vital element not to be found in German Marxism: an "orientation of the will" (*Willensorientierung*), a *"Geist der Tat."* A vivid capsule summation of Korsch's Activism, and an equally vivid anticipation of his later reconstructions of Marxism, this argument shines forth in still another way: namely, as straightforward Kantianism in which an ethical (or noumenal) "ought" is added from outside to the empirical (or phenomenal) "is" which otherwise proceeds fully independently of subjective, human determinations. The separation of the subject and the matter of history is presupposed.

Hegel, who had theorized history as "subject-matter" and whom Lukács was at this time—1911-1912—rediscovering, is nowhere to be found in Korsch's standpoint. With many German intellectuals of the day he considered Kant *the* philosopher, although none of his early writings touch explicitly on philosophical questions—for the record, philosophy had been his "minor field" in the university.[23] Among other things, this marks the distance Korsch would have to travel to reach the argument of *Marxism and Philosophy* (1923), namely, that the separation of (Hegelian) philosophy from Marxism amounted

22. "Die Fabian Society," *Die Tat* 4—8 (November, 1912), pp. 422-427, and "Die sozialistische Formel für die Organization der Volksgemeinschaft," *Die Tat* 4:9 (December, 1912), pp. 507-509. In the discussion immediately following, all citations are to these two essays, unless otherwise noted.

23. Interview with Hedda Korsch.

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to the cancellation of Marxism's revolutionary core. For in the pre-war years Korsch shared what the recent historian of Fabianism, A.M. McBriar, calls the Society's "avoidance of philosophy."[24] Moreover, Korsch seems fully to have shared the Fabians' positivistic conception of science as fact-gathering. Ultimately, he would never supersede this component of his early thinking—modify it, perhaps, but even during his Hegelian-Marxist period of the early to middle 1920s, he remained and would continue afterward to be an heir to the English utilitarian branch of the Enlightenment.

Meanwhile, the most concrete expressions of the Fabian Society's Activism were in Korsch's view its emphasis on positive, practical programs, and its conception of the agents of social change. "Negative" and "retarded" were the terms he applied to the "socialist idea of socialization" that had been presented by the German Marxists and the Second International as a whole: it offered little on the "positive side." In a passage which he would later, in the midst of the German Revolution of 1918, refer back to as a Cassandra-like prediction of the subsequent crisis of German socialism, he argued (in 1912) that: "the emptiness of the socialist formula [for socialization] is not damaging so long as the practical impact is confined to the struggle to alleviate existing conditions. It will become damaging, however, as soon as the moment arrives when socialism somewhere, somehow *enters the government and is required to carry through the socialist organization of the economy.* If this moment were to arrive somewhere today, socialists would be caught unprepared; socialism must admit that it has not yet found a comprehensive plan for the construction of a socialist economy."[25]

Prior to 1918, Korsch did not advance very far beyond this appeal. He did, however, refer, as did the Fabians generally, to the importance of models presented by Guild socialism and French syndicalist currents as vital counter-weights to both "state socialist" ideas and to "false socialization of production" achieved by capitalism. And he called for a great "union of observation, experiment, theoretical study, fantasy, judgment...combined in a project that is entirely foreign to utopian subjectivism." Without "precise, positive programs," socialism, Korsch insisted, quoting Beatrice Webb, "will lose all influence on the intellectual youth...[and will be deemed] intellectually bankrupt by coming generations of thinkers and workers."

Thinkers and workers: in this connection Korsch noted that while the Fabian Society, unlike the SPD, is not a proletarian organization, the "English social movement" is nevertheless "conscious of itself in the Fabian Society," which prevents the broader movement from becoming a "mere wage movement" or a "mere collectivism." He had, in fact, entered the Society during the several years of its most extensive growth and impact on English public life, although the peak of its membership (1913) never exceeded

24. A.M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918* (Cambridge, England, 1962), p. 147.

25. "Die sozialistische Formel," p. 507. Emphasis added.

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2,850.[26] For Korsch, this was not a negative but a positive sign of two essential features of Fabianism. First, he affirmed the fact that the Society rejected the political party model of organization, realizing that the "socialist form of state cannot be achieved by a political party, no matter how large." Instead, Korsch remarked enthusiastically, the Fabians conceive of themselves as a *"geistigen Zentrum"* (literally, a spiritual center), a center for the generation of socialist ideas, and follow the road of a "politics of penetration:" education, scientific research, and the dissemination of knowledge. Secondly, regarding class composition, he greeted the fact that the Fabians' main constituency was composed of the "daily rising...new middle class: ...business, technical and industrial employees [*Beamten*], city and state employees, students, journalists...members of all the theoretical professions."

This is all fairly straightforward Fabianism, but with a certain 'Korschian touch.' Looking back on this from the vantage point of revolutionary ferment in 1919-1920, he specified what he considered the radical implications. In April 1919, for example, he noted that while socialism was a goal for a growing number of SPD members and an object of much scholarly study prior to the revolution, the fact was that "as a *Weltanschauung*, as a spiritual and psychological need and as a revolution of the heart—which means a revolution of the world—socialism was present among educated sections of Germany only within extremely confined...and isolated circles."[27] Or, as he would write a year later, "the few who had perceived the dangers in the tendency toward increasing passivity [in German socialism] for the most part stood outside the actual socialist movement and their insights were condemned to impotence."[28] Clearly, Korsch had himself and the Fabians in mind: they and not the German Marxists had upheld the active vision of socialism.

This retrospective self-analysis highlights a decisive dimension of Korsch's early work—its Activism—but overlooks several things which, in spite of the more than five inches of snow outside, call for comment. Fist, the whole question of the relationship between what we can call 'socialism from the bottom' (the struggle for control of production by the producers) and 'socialism from the top' (the socialist plan and planners) received only fragmentary interpretation from Korsch during the Fabian period. On the one hand, as noted above, he was sympathetic to Guild socialist and syndicalist ideas, and, moreover, was in instinctive solidarity with the idea that any social movement must be self-governing; he was hostile to state socialist ideas, in addition. These components of his early thinking would blossom in 1919-1920 when Korsch emerged as a participant and leading theorist in the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils movement, which he initially understood as a realization of Fabian ideas of industrial democracy. On the other hand, during the Fabian period he

26. *Fabian Socialism, op.cit.*, pp. 149-150.
27. "Ueber die Möglichkeiten einer sozialistischen Aufklärungsarbeit," *Die Tat* 11:1 (April, 1919, p. 67.
28. "Grundsätzliches über Sozialisierung," *Die Tat* 11:12 (March, 1920), pp. 904-905.

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had spoken (above) of the hypothetical moment at which "socialism enters the government and is required to carry through the socialist organization of the economy." Isolated from the working class movement, which was itself not revolutionary in any case, Korsch in the pre-war years tended to think of socialism as a 'top down' affair, even as this conflicted with other impulses in his thinking.

In this connection, the Fabian Society has recently been characterized as an organization of "bureaucratic collectivists before their time" who conceived themselves as the conscious vanguard of a new scientific-technocratic governing class.[29] Not entirely guilty of this charge, Korsch was also not entirely innocent, as signified by his view of the "new middle classes" of employees, civil service workers and "members of the theoretical and practical professions" as the key social agencies of socialist construction, and by his general emphasis on the important role of intellectuals as guides. He was more of a socialist democrat than the Fabian Society as a whole, however, and if he could not in the pre-war years grasp the industrial proletariat as the revolutionary 'subject,' this was not merely a reflection of his petty-bourgeois background: it was equally a reflection of the fact that the proletariat at the time was not Proletarian. Stated differently and in Korsch's own words from 1920: the "spiritual foundation of the development of socialist knowledge and preparedness for action is. . . grounded in the knowledge of the real situation of the proletariat, just as before the war the proletariat, *in one sense so close and visible, yet for the great majority of intellectuals almost non-existent*, formed the dark underground of the rising wealth of Europe and America."[30]

If Korsch's silence on the managerialist implications of Fabianism is partially redeemed by the simultaneously democratic thrust of his own thinking, and by his option in 1919-1920 for a proletarian-democratic position, it should also be seen as a clue to a central ambiguity in his whole perspective, and as a foreshadowing of his turn to Leninist vanguardism in the mid-1920s. Does it need to be added that this ambiguity is hardly peculiar to Korsch? Meanwhile, he was also silent about other aspects of Fabianism which, we might charitably assume, he privately criticized: for example, the prevalent Fabian view of the moral and technical superiority of Western civilization on the basis of which many members endorsed British imperialism and war aims. Similarly, if he had reservations regarding the currents of mysticism and quackery that ran through the Fabians' "scientific spirit," he kept them out of print.

29. George Lichtheim, *A Short History of Socialism* (New York, 1970), pp. 200-201. Interestingly enough, criticism of the Fabians on the ground that they projected a scientific intelligentsia as the governing elite of the future socialist society was levelled in the late 1880s by Friedrich Engels. Meanwhile, from about that time onward, militant syndicalists were presenting the same criticism of Marxism itself—for example, Waclaw Machajski, Georges Sorel, Erwin Szabo, Robert Michels, and Hubert Lagardelle. Starting in the mid-1930s Korsch renewed and developed his early but superficial interest in syndicalism, although he never integrated this dimension into his thinking.

30. "Robert Wilbrandts 'Sozialismus'," *Die Tat* 11:10 (January, 1920), pp. 782-783. Emphasis added.

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Indeed, his solidarity with the Society's "scientific spirit" is part of a broader aspect of Korsch's outlook which, moreover, is quite at odds with Lukács': namely, his appreciation of what then and now is called English practicality or, in some circles, instrumentalism. As suggested earlier, his perspective here was partially a product of his disaffection with what he considered a Germanic tendency toward abstract theorizing; beyond that, it was a matter of Korsch's inner leaning toward the practical, the utilitarian, the next workable step within the given reality. If one wanted the single point upon which Korsch's and Lukács' mental universes diverged most sharply, it would surely be this. In the pre-war period but later as well, Lukács viewed Anglo-American practicality and efficiency (and "scientific spirit") as a crystallization of some of capitalism's most destructive elements. To look briefly ahead once again, it is significant that in the early 1920s Korsch would view the Taylorist principles of labor rationalization and industrial efficiency much as did Lenin, that is, as supposedly neutral techniques which could be creatively utilized in a socialist order. For Lukács, Taylorism was the historically most extreme expression of the "reification" of labor.[31]

In this general connection, it is worth noting that in Hungary around 1906 Lukács came into contact with the "Social Scientific Society" founded (1900) by Oskar Jaszi, and contributed articles to its journal, *Huszadik Szazad* (Twentieth Century). Positivistic, technocratic and reformist in outlook and program, the Social Scientific Society was distinctly and consciously analogous to the English Fabians. In 1904, for example, Jaszi and his colleagues launched a "Free School of the Social Sciences," an educational program for workers based on the premise that an educated proletariat was the precondition not

31. Lukács' critique of Taylorism is in *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London, 1970), pp. 99f. As far as I can tell, Korsch never commented directly on Taylorism at any length. However, he did indicate clear if indirect endorsement by way of his publication in 1921, as part of the "Practical Socialism Pamphlet Series" he directed, of the pamphlet by Kurt Lewin, *Sozialisierung des Taylorsystems: Eine Grundsätzliche Untersuchung zur Arbeits- und Berufs-Psychologie*. The pamphlet understood itself to be a "demonstration of the usefulness of the notorious Taylorsystem for the whole community." Lewin, who later made a name for himself in this country as the founder of "field theory" in social psychology, also remained in contact with Korsch; the two collaborated, for example, on "Mathematical Constructs in Psychology and Sociology," *Journal of the Unified Sciences* 9 (1939). I have not read this essay but understand it to be an attempt to formulate mathematical models for understanding class consciousness. One hesitates to hang too much on this one hook, but the links between Korsch and Lewin in the early 1920s and in the later years are surely a *sign* of the continuous positivistic motif in Korsch's work, which was interrupted only in the slightest manner by *Marxism and Philosophy*. Meanwhile, Korsch's underlying sympathy for 'English practicality' during his Fabian years is visible in many of his essays, among them: "Die Sommerschule der Fabian Society," *Die Tat* 5:5 (August, 1913), pp. 501-504; "Vom englischen Zeitungswesen," *Die Tat* 5:5 (August, 1913), pp. 461-466; "Probleme und Aussichten englischen Universitätsentwicklung," *Die Tat* 6:2 (May, 1914), pp. 154-164. This aspect of Korsch's thinking should not be taken to mean blind enthusiasm, but a positive orientation which, for example, contrasts sharply with Lukács' contemporaneous orientation toward the mental world of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Russian mysticism. That Korsch was no mere admirer of English social life can be seen in his "John Galsworthy," *Die Tat* 5:9 (December, 1913), pp. 961-964, and in his impassioned defense of the suffragette martyrs, "Die erste Märtyerin für Frauenstimmrecht," *Die Tat* 5:4 (July, 1913), pp. 426-427.

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only of modernization and socialism, but of avoiding violent revolution as well. Courses on natural science, hygiene, business law, history, Russian literature and the 'woman question' were among those offered.[32] Lukács, however, emphatically did not share this perspective; for him, the Western road into the twentieth century was already a bad one and could not serve as a genuine solution to the problem of Hungary's backwardness. He published in *Huszadik Szazad* in part because it was one of the only available outlets and in part because the beleagured intellectual opposition in Hungary was, in spite of many basic differences, something of a unified community.[33]

Nevertheless, on the strength of their Activism and their positive-practical approach to socialism, Korsch considered the Fabians the most advanced grouping of socialist thinkers and activists of the day. In the thick of the German Revolution of 1918 one of his first pronouncements was a call for the organization of a Fabian-type *"geistigen Zentrum"* in Germany; and between 1919 and 1920 he would use the term "Practical Socialism" (the title of an early Fabian newspaper) to define his newly found Marxism. He would, in this new period, break decisively with Fabian gradualism and enter the revolutionary camp. Yet, the "Fabian touch" would continue to touch—and taint—his work.

The War Years: An Optimist in Despair

In the summer of 1914 Korsch was recalled from England and inducted into the German army with the rank of second lieutenant—as a student he had completed his "manouvres," the equivalent of reserve officer training. Because he did not hide his lack of enthusiasm for the imminent war and for the wave of nationalist fanaticism that swept Germany in the summer and fall of 1914, he was demoted to a corporal. Although he never carried a gun, Korsch saw active combat duty on the Western and Eastern fronts, was wounded seriously several times, and received numerous medals for bravery, including the Iron Cross. In 1917 he was again promoted to the rank of lieutenant, although throughout the war he lived in the barracks of the regular troops, not in the officers' quarters. From the outset he had defined himself as "Razi, Pazi, Internazi," the German diminutives for Rationalist, Pacifist, Internationalist.[34]

During the war he had little time for writing and the extent of his publications was three short articles in *Die Tat*, written during convalescence

32. For discussions of the opposition intellectual groups in pre-war Hungary and Lukács' relations to them, see the following: Zoltan Horvath, *Die Jahrhundertwende in Ungarn. Geschichte der zweiten Reformgeneration, 1896-1914* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1966); David Kettler, "Culture and Revolution: Lukács in the Hungarian Revolution of 1918," *Telos* 10 (Winter 1971), pp. 35-92; Istvan Mészáros, *Lukács' Concept of Dialectic* (London, 1972); and Tibor Süle, *Sozialdemokratie in Ungarn. Zur Rolle der Intelligenz in der Arbeiterbewegung, 1899-1910* (Cologne and Graz, 1967), esp. pp. 19-24.

33. See Mészáros, *Lukács' Concept of Dialectic.*

34. Interview with Hedda Korsch. As far as I know, this is the only place in Korsch's published writings where Dostoyevsky appears. Lukács, who was immersed in Dostoyevsky during his connection with the Max Weber circle in Heidelberg prior to the war, placed the great Russian writer at the center of his own confrontation with despair during the war years, as can be seen in the well-known final pages of *Theory of the Novel.*

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from wounds in 1917 and early 1918. He evidently followed all anti-war activity with great interest, particularly the Zimmerwald and Kienthal congresses. Yet, on the basis of his published writings it seems clear that, as in Lukács' case, it was not the war itself nor the emergent revolutionary opposition to it that moved Korsch toward Marxism. Where some saw a phoenix beginning to rise from the ashes of war, Korsch saw mainly the ashes, and at close range. He defined the basic feature of the era as "the simple process of the rapid and immense increase of suffering in the world;" "our earlier ideas" regarding the prospect of putting an end to human misery within several generations were based on a "too optimistic evaluation of the state of the world."[35] In fact, he wrote, "many of us go even further" than simply realizing that the work of emancipation will be longer, harder and more disillusioning than we had once believed: "we experience with Dostoyevsky's inscrutable hero, Ivan Karamazov, the absolute irreparability of the suffering of each being, which means that even if the overcoming of suffering and a final harmony were realizable, this would in no way justify or make bearable the miserable reality of the present."[36]

Korsch's several war-time essays were moreover not primarily concerned with immediately practical matters, but with a search for new moral orientations. He appealed, for example, for revisions of the German "national idealism" and the idea of duty (*Pflichtenlehre*) which he believed had contributed much to the disastrous *Gemeinschaft* of militarism, imperialism and chauvinism.[37] As to hopes and possibilities, he did see glimmers in the youth and student movements, which he exhorted to overcome at last their sectarian isolation. In particular, he called on the more advanced and "gifted" sections, whose primary concern had been with their own spiritual suffering, to connect themselves to the real material and spiritual suffering of the majority of German youth.[38]

The heart of his situation at the close of the war was summarized in a brief preface he wrote, probably in the late summer of 1918, to an article he had written in London in 1914 but which was being published in *Die Tat* four years later. The essay, "The Culture of Modern England," he noted, "has no more value. Too much has changed; we know much more; we ourselves have changed. It is now essential to know why we failed, what went wrong... and what we now want." And, he added, "a *Rückblick* [look back] at the past is more valuable than a premature *Zukunftsschau* [glance into the future]."[39] In the months and years immediately following, however, the process of Korsch's own changes and the development of his conception of "what we now want"

35. "Akademisch-Soziale Monatschrift," *Die Tat* 9:11 (February, 1918), p. 974. Ostensibly a review of an issue of this university journal, Korsch used the occasion for reflections on the problems and prospects opened by the war's end.

36. "Akademisch-Soziale Monatschrift," pp. 974-975.

37. "Gedanken über Menschlichkeit" [review of a just-published book with this title by Leopold von Wiese], *Die Tat* 9:5 (August, 1917), p. 462.

38. "Jugendbewegung und Jugendpolitik," *Die Tat* 9:12 (March, 1918), p. 1054.

39. "Die Kultur des modernen England," *Die Tat* 10:11 (February, 1919), pp. 863-864.

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would themselves be transformed by revolutionary events. Plunging himself into the maelstrom, he would attempt to fuse *Rückblick* and *Zukunftsschau* into a single activity. The moment he had dimly anticipated in 1912, in which socialism would be tossed up onto the immediate historical agenda, was about to arrive late in 1918. Like Lukâcs at the same time, Korsch was on the verge of revolutionary Marxism, as was reality—or so it appeared.

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Anti-Bolshevist Communism in Germany*

by Paul Mattick

The process of the concentration of capital and political power forces any socially important movement to attempt either to destroy capitalism or to serve it consistently. The old German labor movement could not do the latter and was neither willing nor able to do the former. It functioned neither in accordance with its original ideology nor with its real immediate interests. For a time it served as a control instrument of the ruling classes. First losing its independence, it was soon to lose its very existence.

Essentially the history of this movement is the history of the capitalist market approached from a 'proletarian' point of view. The so-called market laws were to be utilized in favor of the commodity labor power. Collective actions should lead to the highest possible wages. 'Economic power' gained in this manner was to be secured by way of social reform. The capitalists, too, increased the organized control over the market. Both sides fostered the monopolistic reorganization of capitalist society, though, to be sure, behind their consciously conceived activities there was finally nothing but the expansive need of capital itself. Their policies and aspirations, however much based on real considerations of facts and special needs, were still determined by the fetishistic character of their system of production.

Aside from commodity-fetishism, whatever meaning the market laws may have with regard to special fortunes and losses, and however they may be manipulated by one or another interest group, under no circumstances can they be used in favor of the working class as a whole. It is not the market which controls the people and determines the prevailing social relations but rather the fact that a separate group in society either owns or controls the the means of production and the instruments of suppression.

To overcome capitalism, actions outside the labor-capital-market relations are necessary, actions that do away with both the market and with class relations. Restricted to actions *within* the framework of capitalism, the old labor movement was bound to destroy itself or be destroyed from without. It was destined either to be broken up internally by its own revolutionary opposition, which would give rise to new organizations, or doomed to be destroyed by the capitalistic change from a market- to a controlled-market economy and the accompanying political alterations.

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*This essay was originally published in 1947 in *Retort*, a now defunct anarchist journal edited by Holly Cantine. It is reprinted here with the kind permission of its author. Paul Mattick, a participant in the events he analyzes, emigrated to this country in 1926. In the 1940s, he edited the journals, *Living Marxism* and *New Essays*, to both of which Karl Korsch often contributed. Paul Mattick has also written "The Marxism of Karl Korsch," *Survey* 53 (October, 1964), pp. 86-97.

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I.

The first world war revealed more than anything else that the labor movement was part and parcel of bourgeois society. The various organizations in every nation proved that they had neither the intention nor the means to fight capitalism, that they were interested only in securing their own existence within the capitalist structure. In Germany this was especially obvious because within the international movement the German organizations were the largest and most unified. To hold onto what had been built up since Bismarck's anti-socialist laws, the oppositional minority within the Socialist Party displayed a self-restriction to an extent unknown in other countries. But then, the exiled Russian opposition had less to lose; it had, furthermore, split away from the reformists and class-collaborationists a decade before the outbreak of the war. And it is quite difficult to see in the meek pacifistic arguments of the Independent Labor Party any real opposition to the social patriotism that had saturated the British labor movement. But more had been expected of the German left-wing than of any other group in the International and its behavior at the outbreak of the war was therefore particularly disappointing. Apart from the psychological conditions of individuals, this behavior was the product of the organization-fetishism prevailing in the movement.

This fetishism demanded discipline and strict adherence to democratic formulas—the minority must submit to the will of the majority. And although it is clear that under capitalistic conditions these 'democratic' formulas merely hide facts to the contrary, the opposition failed to perceive that democracy within the labor movement did not differ from bourgeois democracy in general. A minority owned and controlled the organizations just as the capitalist minority owns and controls the means of production and the state apparatus. In both cases, the minorities by virtue of this control determine the behavior of the majorities. But by force of traditional procedures, in the name of discipline and unity, uneasy and against its better knowledge, the anti-war minority supported Social-Democratic chauvinism. There was just one man in the German Reichstag of August 1914—Fritz Kunert—who was not able to vote for war credits but who was also not able to vote against them and thus, to satisfy his conscience, abstained from voting altogether. In the spring of 1915 Liebknecht and Ruehle were the first to vote against the granting of war credits to the government. They remained alone for quite some time and found new companions only to the degree that the chances for a victorious peace disappeared in the military stalemate. After 1916 the radical anti-war attitude was supported and soon swallowed up by a bourgeois movement in search of a negotiated peace, a movement which, finally, was to inherit the bankrupt stock of German imperialism.

As violators of discipline Liebknecht and Ruehle were expelled from the Social-Democratic Reichstag fraction. Together with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and others, more or less forgotten by now, they organized the

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group, *Internationale*, publishing a magazine of the same title in order to uphold the idea of internationalism in the warring world. In 1916 they organized the *Spartakusbund* which cooperated with other left-wing formations such as the *Internationale Socialisten* with Julian Borchardt as their spokesman, and the group around Johann Knief and the radical Bremen paper, *Arbeiterpolitik*. In retrospect it seems that the last-named group was the most advanced, that is, advanced away from Social-Democratic traditions and toward a new approach to the proletarian class struggle. How much the *Spartakusbund* was still adhering to the organization and unity fetish that ruled the German labor movement came to light in their vacillating attitude toward the first attempts at re-orienting the international socialist movement in Zimmerwald and Kienthal. The Spartacists were not in favor of a clean break with the old labor movement in the direction of the earlier Bolshevik example. They still hoped to win the party over to their own position and carefully avoided irreconcilable policies. In April 1917 the *Spartakusbund* merged with the Independent Socialists which formed the center of the old labor movement but was no longer willing to cover up the chauvinism of the conservative majority-wing of the Social-Democratic Party. Relatively independent, yet still within the Independent Socialist Party, the *Spartakusbund* left this organization only at the end of the year 1918.

II.

Within the *Spartakusbund* Liebknecht's and Luxemburg's position had been attacked by the Bolsheviks as inconsistent. And inconsistent it was but for pertinent reasons. At first glance, the main reason seemed to be based on the illusion that the Social-Democratic Party could be reformed. With changing circumstances, it was hoped, the masses would cease to follow their conservative leaders and support the left-wing of the party. And although such illusions did exist, first with regard to the old party and later with regard to the Independent Socialists, they do not altogether explain the hesitancy on the part of the Spartacist leaders to adopt the ways of Bolshevism. Actually, the Spartacists faced a dilemma no matter in which direction they looked. By not trying—at the right time—to break resolutely with Social-Democracy, they forfeited their chance to form a strong organization capable of playing a decisive role in the expected social upheavals. Yet in view of the real situation in Germany, in view of the history of the German labor movement, it was quite difficult to believe in the possibility of quickly forming a counter-party to the dominant labor organizations. Of course, it might have been possible to form a party in the Leninist manner, a party of professional revolutionists, willing to usurp power, if necessary, against the will of the majority of the working class. But this was precisely what the people around Rosa Luxemburg did not aspire to. Throughout the years of their opposition to reformism and revisionism, they had never narrowed their distance from the Russian 'left,' from Lenin's concept of organization and revolution. In sharp

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controversies, Rosa Luxemburg had pointed out that Lenin's concepts were of a Jacobin nature and inapplicable in Western Europe where not a bourgeois but a proletarian revolution was on the order of the day. Although she, too, spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat it meant, to her, in distinction to Lenin, 'the manner in which democracy is employed, not in its abolition: —it was to be the work of the class, and not of a small minority in the name of the class.'

Enthusiastically as the Spartacists greeted the overthrow of Czarism, they did not lose their critical capacities, nor did they forget the character of the Bolshevik party, nor the historical limitations of the Russian Revolution. But regardless of the immediate realities and the final outcome of this revolution, it had to be supported as a first break in the imperialist phalanx and as the forerunner of the expected German revolution. Of the latter many signs had appeared in strikes, hunger riots, mutinies and all kinds of passive resistances. But the growing opposition to the war and to Ludendorff's dictatorship did not find organizational expression to any significant extent. Rather than going to the left, the masses followed their old organizations, which lined up with the liberal bourgeoisie. The upheavals in the German Navy and finally the November rebellion were carried on in the spirit of Social-Democracy, that is, in the spirit of the defeated German bourgeoisie.

The German Revolution appeared to be more significant than it really was. The spontaneous enthusiasm of the worker was more for ending the war than for changing existing social relations. Their demands, expressed through workers' and soldiers' councils, did not transcend the possibilities of bourgeois society. Even the revolutionary minority, and here particularly the *Spartakusbund*, failed to develop a consistent revolutionary program. Its political and economic demands were of a two-fold nature: they were constructed to serve as demands to be agreed upon by the bourgeoisie and its Social-Democratic allies, and as slogans of a revolution which was to do away with both bourgeois society and its supporters.

Of course, within the ocean of political mediocrity that was the German revolution there were revolutionary streams which warmed the hearts of the radicals and induced them to undertake actions historically quite out of place. Partial successes, due to the temporary stunning of the ruling class and the general passivity of the broad masses—exhausted as they were by four years of hunger and war—nourished the hope that the revolution might end in a socialist society. Only no one really knew what a socialist society would be like, what steps ought to be taken to usher it into existence. "All power to the workers' and soldiers' councils," however attractive as a slogan, still left all essential questions open. The revolutionary struggles that followed November 1918 were thus not determined by the consciously concocted plans of the revolutionary minority but were thrust upon it by the slowly developing counter-revolution which was backed by a majority of the people. The fact was that the broad German masses inside and outside the labor movement did

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not look forward to the establishment of a new society, but backwards to the restoration of liberal capitalism without its bad aspects, its political inequalities, its militarism and imperialism. They merely desired the completion of the reforms started before the war which were designed to lead into a benevolent capitalistic system.

The ambiguity which characterized the policy of the *Spartakusbund* was largely the result of the conservatism of the masses. The Spartacist leaders were ready, on the one hand, to follow the clear revolutionary course desired by the so-called 'ultra-left' and on the other hand they felt sure that such a policy could not be successful in view of the prevailing mass attitude and the international situation.

The effect of the Russian Revolution upon Germany had hardly been noticeable. Nor was there any reason to expect that a radical turn in Germany would have any greater repercussions in France, England and America. If it had been difficult for the Allies to interfere decisively in Russia, they would face lesser difficulties in crushing a German communist uprising. Emerging from the war victorious, the capitalism of these nations had been enormously strengthened; there was no real indication that their patriotic masses would refuse to fight against a weaker revolutionary Germany. At any rate, aside from such considerations there was little reason to believe that the German masses, engaged in getting rid of their arms, would resume a war against foreign capitalism in order to get rid of their own. The policy which was apparently the most 'realistic' for dealing with the international situation and which was soon to be proposed by Wolfheim and Lauffenberg under the name of National-Bolshevism was still unrealistic in view of the real power relations after the war.

The plan to resume the war with Russia's help against Allied capitalism failed to consider that the Bolsheviks were neither ready nor able to participate in such a venture. Of course, the Bolsheviks were not adverse to Germany or any other nation making difficulties for the victorious imperialists, yet they did not encourage the idea of a new-scale war to carry on the 'world revolution.' They desired support for their own regime, whose permanency was still questioned by the Bolsheviks themselves, but they were not interested in supporting revolutions in other countries by military means. Both to follow a nationalistic course, independent of the question of alliances, and to unite Germany once more for a war of 'liberation' from foreign oppression was out of the question for the additional reason that those social layers which the 'national revolutionists' would have to win over to their cause were precisely the people who ended the war before the complete defeat of the German armies in order to prevent a further spreading of 'Bolshevism.' Unable to become the masters of international capitalism, they had preferred to maintain themselves as its best servants. Yet, there was no way of dealing with international German questions which did not involve a definite foreign policy. The radical German revolution was thus defeated even before it could arise both by its own and by world capitalism.

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The need to consider seriously international relations never arose, however, for the German *Left*. Perhaps this was the clearest indication of its insignificance. Neither was the question as to what to do with political power, once it was captured, raised concretely. No one seemed to believe that these questions would have to be answered. Liebknecht and Luxemburg felt sure that a long period of class struggle was facing the German proletariat with no sign of an early victory. They wanted to make the best of it, suggesting a return to parliament and to trade-union work. However, in their previous activities they had already overstepped the boundaries of bourgeois politics; they could not return to the prisons of tradition. They had rallied around themselves the most radical element of the German proletariat which was now determined to consider any fight the final struggle against capitalism. These workers interpreted the Russian Revolution in accordance with their own needs and their own mentality; they cared less about difficulties lurking in the future than about destroying as much as possible the forces of the past. There were only two ways open for the revolutionists: either to go down with the forces whose cause was lost in advance, or to return to the fold of bourgeois democracy and perform social work for the ruling classes. For the real revolutionist there was, of course, only one way: to go down with the fighting workers. This is why Eugen Levine spoke of the revolutionist as a "dead person on furlough," and why Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht went to their death almost somnambulistically.

III.

The fact that the international bourgeoisie could conclude its war with no more than the temporary loss of the Russian business determined the whole post-war history down to the Second World War. In retrospect, the struggle of the German proletariat from 1912 to 1923 appeared as minor frictions that accompanied the capitalistic re-organization process which followed the war-crisis. But there has always been a tendency to consider the by-products of violent changes in the capitalistic structure as expressions of the revolutionary will of the proletariat. The radical optimists, however, were merely whistling in the dark. The darkness was real, to be sure, and the noise was encouraging, yet at this late hour there is no need to take it seriously. As exciting as it is to recall the days of proletarian actions in Germany—the mass meetings, demonstrations, strikes, street fights, the heated discussions, the hopes, fears, and disappointments, the bitterness of defeat and the pain of prison and death—yet no lessons but negative ones can now be drawn from all these undertakings. All the energy and all the enthusiasm were not enough to bring about a social change or to alter the contemporary mind. The lesson learned was how *not* to proceed. How to realize the revolutionary needs of the proletariat was not discovered.

The emotional upheavals provided a never-ending incentive for research. Revolution, which for so long had been a mere theory and a vague hope, had

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appeared for a moment as a practical possibility. The chance had been missed, no doubt, but it would return to be better utilized next time. If not the people, at least the 'times' were revolutionary and the prevailing crisis conditions would sooner or later revolutionize the minds of the workers. If actions had been brought to an end by the firing-squads of Social-Democratic police, if the workers' initiative was once more destroyed through the emasculation of their councils by way of legislation, if their leaders were again acting not with the class but 'in behalf of the class' in the various capitalistic institutions—nevertheless the war had revealed that the fundamental capitalistic contradictions could not be solved and that crisis conditions were now the 'normal' conditions of capitalism. New revolutionary actions were probable and would find the revolutionists better prepared.

Although the revolutions in Germany, Austria and Hungary had failed, there was still the Russian Revolution to remind the world of the reality of the proletarian claims. All discussions circled around this revolution, and rightly so, for this revolution was to determine the future course of the German *Left*. In December 1919 the Communist Party of Germany was formed. After the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg it was led by Paul Levi and Karl Radek. This new leadership was at once attacked by a left opposition because of its tendency to advocate a return to parliamentary activities. At the foundation of the party its radical elements had succeeded in giving it an anti-parliamentarian character and a wide democratic control in distinction to the Leninist type of organization. An anti-trade union policy had also been adopted. Liebknecht and Luxemburg subordinated their own divergent views to those of the radical majority. Not so Levi and Radek. Already in the summer of 1919 they made it clear that they would split the party in order to participate in parliamentary elections. Simultaneously they began to propagandize for a return to trade-union work despite the fact that the party was already engaged in the formation of new organizations no longer based on trades or even industries, but on factories. These factory organizations were combined into one class organization, the General Labor Union. At the Heidelberg convention in October 1919 all delegates who disagreed with the new central committee and maintained the position taken at the founding of the Communist Party were expelled. The following February the central committee decided to get rid of all districts controlled by the left opposition. The opposition had the Amsterdam bureau of the Communist International on its side, which led to the dissolution of that bureau by the International in order to support the Levi-Radek combination. And finally in April 1920 the left wing founded the Communist Workers Party.

The Communist Workers Party (KAPD) did not as yet realize that its struggle against the groups around Levi and Radek was the resumption of the old fight of the German *Left* against Bolshevism, and in a larger sense against the new structure of world capitalism which was slowly taking shape. It decided to enter the Communist International. It seemed more Bolshevik

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than the Bolsheviks. But the Communist International did not need to decide anew against the 'ultra-left'; its leaders had made their decision twenty years before. Nevertheless, the executive committee of the Communist International still tried to keep in contact with the Communist Workers Party not only because it still contained the majority of the old Communist Party, but also because both Levi and Radek, although doing the work of the Bolsheviks in Germany, had been the closest disciples not of Lenin but of Rosa Luxemburg.

At the second world congress of the Third International in 1920 the Russian Bolsheviks were already in a position to dictate the policy of the International. The Communist Workers Party's reactions were summed up in Herman Gorter's 'Open Letter to Lenin,' which answered Lenin's 'Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder.' The actions of the International against the 'ultra-left' were the first attempts to interfere with and control all the various national sections. The pressure upon the Communist Workers Party to return to parliamentarianism and trade unionism was constantly increased, but the Communist Workers Party withdrew from the International after its third congress.

IV.

At the second world congress the Bolshevik leaders, in order to secure control over the International, proposed twenty-one conditions of admission to the Communist International. Since they controlled the congress they had no difficulty getting these conditions adopted. Thereupon the struggle on questions of organization which, twenty years previously, had caused the controversies between Luxemburg and Lenin were openly resumed. Behind the debated organizational questions were, of course, the fundamental differences between the Bolshevik revolution and the Western workers.

These twenty-one conditions endowed the executive of the International, that is, the leaders of the Russian party, with complete control and authority over all national sections. In Lenin's opinion, it was not possible to realize dictatorship on an international scale "without a strictly centralized, disciplined party, capable of leading and managing every branch, every sphere, every variety of political and cultural work." This attitude—which insisted on applying the Russian experience to Western Europe where entirely different conditions prevailed—appeared to the left opposition as an error, a political mistake, a lack of understanding of the peculiarities of Western capitalism and the result of Lenin's fanatical preoccupation with Russian problems. Lenin's policy seemed to be determined by the backwardness of Russian capitalistic development, and though it had to be fought in Western Europe since it tended to support the capitalist restoration, it could not be called an outright counter-revolutionary force. This benevolent view towards the Bolshevik revolution was soon to be destroyed by the further activities of the Bolsheviks themselves.

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The Bolsheviks went from small 'mistakes' to always greater 'mistakes.' Although the German Communist Party which was affiliated with the Third International grew steadily, particularly after its unification with the Independent Socialists, the proletarian class, already on the defensive, lost one position after another to the forces of capitalist reaction. Competing with the Social Democratic Party, which represented parts of the middle class and the so-called trade-unionist labor aristocracy, the Communist Party could not help growing as these layers became pauperized in the permanent depression in which German capitalism found itself. With the steady growth of unemployment, dissatisfaction with the status quo and its staunchest supporters, the German Social Democrats, also increased.

Only the heroic side of the Russian Revolution was popularized; the real everyday character of the Bolshevik regime was hidden by both its friends and foes. For, at this time, the state capitalism that was unfolding in Russia was still as foreign to the bourgeoisie, indoctrinated with laissez faire ideology, as was socialism proper. And socialism was conceived by most socialists as a kind of state control of industry and natural resources. The Russian Revolution became a powerful and skillfully fostered myth, accepted by the impoverished sections of the German proletariat to compensate for their increasing misery. The myth was bolstered by the reactionaries to increase their followers' hatred for the German workers and for all revolutionary tendencies generally.

Against the myth, against the powerful propaganda apparatus of the Communist International that built up the myth, which was accompanied and supported by a general onslaught of capital against labor all over the world—against all this, reason could not prevail. All radical groups to the left of the Communist Party went from stagnation to disintegration. It did not help that these groups had the 'right' policy and the Communist Party the 'wrong' one, for no questions of revolutionary strategy were here involved. What was taking place was that world capitalism was going through a stabilization process and ridding itself of the disturbing proletarian elements which under the crisis conditions of war and military collapse had tried to assert themselves.

Russia, which of all nations was most in need of stabilization, was the first country to destroy its labor movement by way of the Bolshevik party dictatorship. Under conditions of imperialism, however, internal stabilization is possible only by external power politics. The character of Russia's foreign policy under the Bolsheviks was determined by the peculiarities of the European postwar situation. Modern imperialism is no longer content with merely asserting itself by means of military pressure and actual warfare; the 'fifth column' is the recognized weapon of all nations. Yet the imperialistic virtue of today was still a sheer necessity for the Bolsheviks who were trying to hold their own in a world of imperialist competition. There was nothing contradictory in the Bolshevik policy of taking all power from the Russian

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workers, and, at the same time, attempting to build up strong labor organizations in other nations.

Of course, the Bolsheviks did not regard the various sections of their International as mere foreign legions in the service of the 'workers' fatherland;' they believed that what helped Russia was also serving progress elsewhere. They believed, and rightly so, that the Russian revolution had initiated a general and world-wide movement from monopoly capitalism to state capitalism, and they held that this new state of affairs was a step in the direction of socialism. In other words, if not in their tactics, then in their theory they were still Social-Democrats and from their point of view the Social-Democratic leaders were really traitors to their own cause when they helped preserve the laissez faire capitalism of yesterday. Against Social-Democracy they felt themselves to be true revolutionists; against the 'ultra-left' they felt they were realists, the true representatives of 'scientific socialism.'

But what they thought of themselves and what they really were are different things. Insofar as they continued to misunderstand their historical mission, they were continuously defeating their own cause; insofar as they were forced to live up to the objective needs of their revolution, they became the greatest counter-revolutionary force of modern capitalism. By fighting as true Social-Democrats for predominance in the socialist movement of the world, by identifying the narrow nationalistic interests of state-capitalistic Russia with the interests of the world proletariat, and by attempting to maintain at all costs the power position they had won in 1917, they were merely preparing their own downfall, which was dramatized in numerous factional struggles, reached its climax in the Moscow trials, and ended in the Stalinist Russia of today—one imperialist nation among others.

In view of this development, what was more important than criticism of the actual policies of the Bolsheviks in Germany and the world at large was the recognition of the real historical importance of the Bolshevist movement, that is, of militant Social-Democracy. What a conservative Social-Democratic movement was capable of doing and not doing, the parties in Germany, France, and England have revealed only too clearly. The Bolsheviks showed what they would have done had they still been a subversive movement. They would have attempted to organize unorganized capitalism and to replace individual entrepreneurs by bureaucrats. They had no other plans and even these were only extensions of the process of cartellization, trustification and centralization which was going on all over the capitalist world. In Western Europe, the socialist parties could no longer act bolshevistically, for their bourgeoisie was already instituting this kind of 'socialization.' All that the socialists could do was to lend them a hand; that is, to 'grow slowly' into the 'emerging socialist society.'

The meaning of Bolshevism was completely revealed only with the emergence of fascism. And in the light of the present, the 'ultra-left' groups in Germany and Holland must be considered the first anti-fascist organizations,

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anticipating in their struggle against the communist parties the future need of the working class to fight the fascist form of capitalism. The first theorists of anti-fascism are to be found among the spokesmen of the radical sects: Gorter and Pannekoek in Holland; Ruehle, Pfempfert, Broh and Fraenkel in Germany; and they can be considered as such by reason of their struggle against the concept of party-rule and state control, by their attempts to actualize the concepts of the council movement towards the direct determination of its destiny, and by their upholding the struggle of the German *Left* against both Social-Democracy and its Leninistic branch.

VI.

The Russian soviets and the German workers' and soldiers' councils represented the proletarian element in both the Russian and the German revolution. In both nations these movements were soon suppressed by military and judicial means. What remained of the Russian soviets after the firm entrenchment of the Bolshevik party dictatorship was merely the Russian version of the later Nazi labor-front. The legalized German council movement turned into an appendage of trade-unionism and soon into a capitalistic form of control. Even the spontaneously formed councils of 1918 were—the majority of them—far from revolutionary. Their form of organization, based on class needs and not on the various special interests resulting from the capitalistic division of labor, was all that was radical about them. But whatever their shortcomings, it must be said that there was nothing else on which to base revolutionary hopes. Although they frequently turned against the *Left*, still it was expected that the objective needs of this movement would bring it inevitably into conflict with the traditional powers. This form of organization was to be preserved in its original character and built up in preparation for coming struggles.

Thinking in terms of a continued German revolution, the 'ultra-left' was committed to a fight to the finish against trade-unions and against the existing parliamentary parties; in brief, against all forms of opportunism and compromise. Thinking in terms of the probability of a side-by-side existence with the old capitalist powers, the Russian Bolsheviks could not conceive a policy without compromise. Lenin's arguments in defense of the Bolshevik position in relation to trade-unions, parliamentarianism and opportunism in general elevated the particular needs of Bolshevism into false revolutionary principles. Yet it would not do to show the illogical character of the Bolshevik arguments, for as illogical as the arguments were from a revolutionary point of view, they emanated logically from the peculiar role of the Bolsheviks within the Russian capitalistic emancipation and from the Bolshevik international policy which supported Russia's national interests.

One part of the 'ultra-left' movement went one step beyond the anti-Bolshevism of the Communist Workers Party and its adherents in the General Labor Union (AAU). It thought that the history of the social democratic

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parties and the practices of the Bolshevik parties proved sufficiently that it was futile to attempt to replace reactionary parties for the reason that the party form of organization itself had become useless and even dangerous. The movement split: one section discarded the party form altogether, the other remained as the 'economic organization' of the Communist Workers Party. The former leaned toward the syndicalist and anarchist movements without, however, giving up its Marxian *Weltanschauung*. The other considered itself the heir to all that had been revolutionary in the Marxian movement of the past. It attempted to bring about a Fourth International but succeeded only in effecting a closer cooperation with similar groups in a few European countries.

History bypassed both groups; they argued in a vacuum. Neither the Communist Workers Party nor the anti-party section of the General Labor Union overcame their status of being 'ultra-left' sects. Their internal problems became quite artificial for, as regards activities, there was actually no difference between them.

These organizations—remnants of the proletarian attempt to play a role in the upheavals of 1918—attempted to apply their experiences within a development which was consistently moving in the opposite direction from that in which these experiences originated. The Communist Party alone, by virtue of Russian control, could really grow within the trend toward fascism. But by representing Russian, not German fascism, it, too, had to succumb to the emerging Nazi-movement which, recognizing and accepting prevailing capitalist tendencies, finally inherited the old German labor movement in its entirety.

After 1923 the German 'ultra-left' movement ceased to be a serious political factor in the German labor movement. Its last attempt to force the trend of development in its direction was dissipated in the short-lived activity in March 1921 under the popular leadership of Max Hoelz. Its militant members, being forced into illegality, introduced methods of conspiracy and expropriation into the movement, thereby hastening its disintegration. Although organizationally the 'ultra-left' groups continued to exist up to the beginning of Hitler's dictatorship, their functions were restricted to that of discussion clubs trying to understand their own failures and that of the German revolution.

VI.

The decline of the 'ultra-left' movement, the changes in Russia and in the composition of the Bolshevik parties, the rise of fascism in Italy and Germany restored the old relationship between economics and politics that had been disturbed during and after the First World War. All over the world capitalism was now sufficiently stabilized to determine the main political trend. Fascism and Bolshevism, products of crisis conditions, were—like the crisis itself—also mediums for a new prosperity, a new expansion of capital and the resumption of the imperialist competitive struggles. But just as any major crisis appears as

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the 'final' crisis to those who suffer most, so the accompanying political changes appeared as expressions of the breakdown of capitalism. But the wide gap between appearance and reality sooner or later changes an exaggerated optimism into exaggerated pessimism with regard to revolutionary possibilities. Two ways, then, remain open for the revolutionist: he can capitulate to the dominant political processes, or he can retire into a life of contemplation and wait for the turn of events.

Until the final collapse of the German labor movement, the retreat of the 'ultra-left' appeared to be a return to theoretical work. The organizations existed in the form of weekly and monthly publications, pamphlets and books. The publications secured the organizations, the organizations the publications. While mass-organizations served small capitalistic minorities, the mass of the workers were represented by individuals. The contradiction between the theories of the 'ultra-left' and the prevailing conditions became unbearable. The more one thought in collective terms the more isolated one became. Capitalism, in its fascistic form, appeared as the only real collectivism, and anti-fascism as a return to an early bourgeois individualism. The mediocrity of capitalist man, and therefore of the revolutionist under capitalist conditions, became painfully obvious within the small stagnating organizations. More people, starting from the premise that the 'objective conditions' were ripe for revolution, explained its absence with such 'subjective factors' as lack of class consciousness and lack of understanding and character on the part of the workers. These lacks themselves had again to be explained by 'objective conditions,' for the shortcomings of the proletariat undoubtedly resulted from their special position within the social relations of capitalism. The necessity of restricting activity to educational work became a virtue: developing the class consciousness of the workers was regarded as the most essential of all revolutionary tasks. But the old social-democratic belief that 'knowledge is power' was no longer convincing for there is no direct connection between knowledge and its application.

The triumph of German fascism ended the long period of revolutionary discouragement, disillusionment and despair. Everything became once more extremely clear; the immediate future was outlined in all its brutality. The labor movement proved for the last time that the criticism directed against it by the revolutionists was more than justified. The fight of the 'ultra-left' against the official labor movement proved to have been the only consistent struggle against capitalism that had thus far been waged.

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Korsch's Revolutionary Historicism

by Douglas Kellner

Out of Karl Korsch's opposition to Stalinism in the German Communist Party and out of his critique of Leninism and Marxism has arisen a legend that throughout the 1920s Korsch was a left-oppositionalist and heretical theorist. It has been alleged that Korsch had deep reservations about entering the Communist party and that, from the beginning of his involvement in the Communist movement, he opposed the dominant policies of the German and Soviet Communists from a left-opposition position; that he engaged in left-opposition activity against the Communist International (Comintern), by participating in a left offensive against Bolshevism at the Comintern World Congress in 1924; and finally, that he began in the early 1920s to develop a heretical theoretical current which opposed a critical, or Western Marxist, to Communist (Marxist-Leninist) orthodoxy. Yet, a careful reconstruction of Korsch's writings and political activities does not support the prevalent New Left image of Korsch. In my view, Korsch reveals the limits of Leninism, and its failure as a model of revolution for the West by living through the Leninist experience and painfully criticizing it from within. It is Korsch's special version of the philosophy of praxis which I call his "revolutionary historicism" which underlies both his support of Leninism and the Soviet Union and then his opposition.

To understand Korsch's position, it is imperative to situate his thought in the class struggles of the 1920s. His work reflects the hopes and excitement, and subsequent disillusion and rejection of the Bolshevik revolution, as well as the vicissitudes of the German revolutionary movement from the November 1918 revolution to its tragic defeat in the rise of fascism. Thus, Korsch's works help us to understand this period and the destructive effects of Stalinism.

1. The Turn to Communism

From 1919 on Korsch was active in the workers' councils movement and then the communist movement in Jena. He contributed articles to leftist newspapers and journals, helped form a councils' school, and gave lectures to workers, students, and citizen groups.[1] After the Kapp putsch in March 1920—which

1. Michael Buckmiller's bibliography of Korsch's writings in *Ueber Karl Korsch* (Frankfurt, 1973) lists 129 articles which Korsch published between 1919-1929. My interpretation is much indebted to Buckmiller's article, "Marxismus als Realität. Zur Rekonstruktion der theoretischen und politischen Entwicklung Karl Korschs," in *Ueber Karl Korsch*. For other biographical material on Korsch, cf. Hedda Korsch, "Memories of Karl Korsch," *New Left Review* 76 (November-December, 1972). During this period, Korsch also worked with a councils school group in which Karl Wittfogel participated. See G.L. Ulmen, "Wittfogel's Science of Society," *Telos* 24 (Summer 1975), p. 83.

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was thwarted by a general strike—Korsch saw the real dangers of counter-revolution and the need for a more resolute and militant Left.[2] Originally, Korsch was a member of the USPD—the splinter group which had split from the Socialist Party (SPD) in 1917 in protest of war policies—and at the USPD convention in Halle of October 1920 he supported the majority decision to join the German Communist Party (KPD) and to accept the "twenty-one conditions" which were laid down by the Comintern for admission, and which were to (disastrously) link the fate of the German and the Soviet Communist parties.[3]

There is much confusion concerning Korsch's attitude toward joining the KPD and accepting these conditions. Gerlach claims that "Korsch was originally an opponent of the uniting of the USPD with the KPD, especially because of the 'twenty-one conditions' demanded by Moscow...and which called for a conspiratorial organization-apparatus beside the party. He saw here an opening for the fall of party democracy."[4] Korsch's wife Hedda similarly claims that: "He attended the USPD conference in 1920 when the party split and the majority opted for fusion with the Communists. Korsch went with the majority although he had great reservations about the twenty-one points that the Comintern had laid down... His main reservation about the twenty-one points concerned the centralized discipline from Moscow, the degree of dependence on the Russian Party that they implied."[5] Yet, it can be shown that Korsch was at the time and was to remain until 1925 an unambiguous champion of Leninism and of the Bolshevization of the KPD. Buckmiller has found a series of Korsch's 1920 articles which show that Korsch supported "the immediate and unconditional acceptance and the speedy carrying through of the entrance conditions to the Third International."[6] In

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2. For two accounts of the Kapp putsch, cf. Albert S. Lindemann's *The 'Red Years'* (Berkeley, 1974) and Werner T. Angress' *Stillborn Revolution* (Princeton, 1963).

3. See Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (Cambridge, 1955). For an account of the 1920 USPD Convention see Lindemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-256. The two standard German texts which deal with the activities of the Communist Party in Germany in the Weimar Republic are Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimar Republik* (Frankfurt, 1969) and Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus* (Frankfurt, 1969). Ruth Fisher's *Stalin and German Communism* (Cambridge, 1948) offers a fascinating insider's account of the relation between the German and Soviet Communists but it is full of inaccuracies and Fisher very often distorts her own role in the events.

4. See Erich Gerlach's introduction to *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 18, note 15. Gerlach first made Korsch's acquaintance in the late 1920s when Korsch was already an oppositionalist and no doubt read his later attitude back into the earlier period. Gerlach bases his claim on a reference to a 1941 essay by Korsch, "Revolution for What?" in which Korsch analyzes events in the 1920s from his later perspective, but does not himself make the claim which Gerlach attributes to him. The claim is repeated by the German editor of another Korsch anthology and by two of Korsch's American editors. Cf. the editors' comment in Karl Korsch, *Kommentäre zur deutschen 'Revolution' und ihrer Niederlage* (Amsterdam, 1972), p. 45; Fred Halliday's introduction to *Marxism and Philosophy* (New York, 1970), p. 8; and Paul Breines' introduction to Karl Korsch, *Three Essays on Marxism* (New York, 1972), p. 5.

5. Hedda Korsch, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

6. *Neue Zeitung* 22 (October 5, 1920). See Buckmiller, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

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these articles, mostly published in the local communist newspaper *Neue Zeitung*, Korsch argued that "The Bolshevik movement is of decisive importance for world revolution" and took a consistently positive position toward the Soviet Union, while criticizing the USPD leadership for its negative or mistrustful attitude toward the Soviet revolution.[7]

Korsch's reason for joining the German Communist Party and supporting the entrance into the Communist International was his belief that Germany was in a revolutionary situation and that it was imperative to create a revolutionary organization along the lines of the centralized, highly disciplined Bolshevik party: "When we have this conception, then we can only place ourselves on the side of the Bolsheviks."[8] Korsch believed that the Bolsheviks had created an efficient revolutionary organization which had proved itself successful in the Russian revolution, while the German parties had failed to carry through a socialist revolution because they lacked the proper revolutionary organization, theory and strategy.

2. Lenin's Influence on Korsch

From 1920 to 1923, Korsch was an active communist militant. His reading and interpretation of Marx at this time was closely connected with his political work and his essays were often meant to present the basic ideas of Marxism to workers and party militants in a clear and compelling form.[9] He also lectured on Hegel at the law school in Jena, concluding that the Hegelian dialectical method was the theoretical heart of Marxism. Although Korsch saw the Hegelian dialectic as providing the *form* of the Marxist theory, its *content* derived from the actual working class struggles.[10] Korsch continually referred to Marx's dictum in the *Communist Manifesto* that "Communism, for us, is not a state of things to be established nor an ideal to which reality must adapt itself; we call communism the actual movement which transforms existing conditions."[11]

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7. *Neue Zeitung* 209 (September 19, 1920); Buckmiller, p. 36. Korsch cited Rosa Luxemburg's idea that the "fatherland of the proletariat is the socialist international" and argued that it was imperative to join the Third International and defend in every way the Soviet Revolution, for "if Russia loses the revolution, then all is also lost in Germany." See also *Neue Zeitung* 223 (October 6, 1920). Korsch's articles indicate that he did not see entry into the KPD and the twenty-one conditions as a threat to party democracy. He believed that one must place the twenty-one conditions "in the context of the basic propositions [Second World Congress of the Comintern] and then one's hesitations will disappear. . . democracy within the organization which the Third International has affirmed remains thoroughly preserved. . . In the stages of intensified civil war the illegal organization must have the possibility to eliminate traitors without further ado."

8. *Neue Zeitung* 223, *op.cit.*; Buckmiller, p. 37.

9. See "Quintessenz des Marxismus," "Kernpunkte der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung," "Die Marxsche Dialektik," "Fünfzehn Thesen über wissenschaftlichen Sozialismus," and others, in Karl Korsch, *Politische Texte*, edited by Erich Gerlach and Jürgen Seifert (Frankfurt, 1964).

10. See "Die Marxsche Dialektik," in *Marxismus und Philosophie, op.cit.*, p. 166, and *Marxism and Philosophy* (New York, 1970), pp. 47ff. Buckmiller suggests that Korsch used Hegel as a cover to present Marxian ideas in the reactionary law faculty, *op.cit.*, pp. 42-43.

11. Cited by Korsch in *Marxism and Philosophy*, pp. 45-46. Cf. also Korsch's "15 Theses on

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Korsch was developing a radically historicist version of Marxism that derived both the content and form of ideology and theory from its "material and economic foundation." In *Marxism and Philosophy* he approvingly cites Hegel's dictum that "philosophy can be nothing but '*its own epoch comprehended in thought*'," and then proceeds to dialectically relate both Hegel's and Marx's philosophy to the revolutionary struggles of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat respectively. He wished to demonstrate "the connections between the 'intellectual movement' of the period and the 'revolutionary movement' that was contemporary with it."[12] Hegel was read as the philosopher of the revolutionary bourgeoisie and his philosophy was connected with its revolutionary struggles. In fact, the greatest thinker produced by bourgeois society in its revolutionary period regarded a 'revolution in the form of thought' as an objective component of the total social process of a real revolution.[13]

Korsch was convinced that there was an inner connection between German idealism and Marxism on the grounds that both were expressions of the same revolutionary process. Thus, his defense of the importance of philosophy and his claim that understanding the relation between Marxism and philosophy requires grasping the Hegelian roots of Marxism, has given rise to the interpretation of *Marxism and Philosophy* as a classic of "Hegelian Marxism" and has led to the picture of Korsch as one of the creators of a current that was in opposition to the dominant Marxist orthodoxy.[14] What has not been emphasized is the extent to which Korsch believed he was merely restoring Marxist orthodoxy: he saw himself with Lenin and Luxemburg, representing a position of revolutionary socialism against the reformist Marxism of the Second International. Allegedly, *Marxism and Philosophy* would provide a restoration of the philosophical dimension of Marxism and the importance of ideological struggle for revolutionary practice, much as Lenin had restored the political dimension of Marxism and the importance of revolutionary class struggle.

In Korsch's famous periodization of Marxism, it is evident that he views the works of Lenin and Luxemburg as a restoration of that genuine Marxism which had degenerated in the Second International: Korsch believed that Marxist theories had fallen victim to a "transcendental underestimation of ideology," and had failed to perceive the need for the critique of ideology and changes of consciousness. Korsch wanted to develop a theory of total revolution that would

Scientific Socialism," in *Politische Texte, op.cit.*, p. 51, where he writes: "1. Scientific socialism (socialism as a science) is the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement. This signifies: a) It is not a thing for itself (bourgeois 'presuppositionless' or 'pure' science or philosophy) but is a *component* of a real process, a 'movement,' or more precisely: an 'action,' the action of the 'oppressed class,' the 'proletariat'. . . b) It is a *particular* component of this movement, something special within this whole: the theoretical expression, science."

12. *Marxism and Philosophy*, pp. 36, 40, 43.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 41. A remarkably similar interpretation of Hegel is found in Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* (Boston, 1960), pp. 3ff. Marcuse favorably discusses *Marxism and Philosophy* in a 1931 article, "Das Problem der geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit: Wilhelm Dilthey," in *Die Gesellschaft* VIII (1931), pp. 350-367.

14. This interpretation begins with Merleau-Ponty's *Adventures of the Dialectic* (Evanston, Ill., 1973) and passed over to Germany through Iring Fetscher's work, such as "The Relationship of Marxism to Hegel," in *Marx and Marxism* (New York, 1971).

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"restore the correct and full sense of Marx's theory...a theory of social revolution that comprises all areas of society as a totality."[15] This could be achieved by restoring the Marxist concept of ideology and philosophy, and the practice of ideological struggle, as Lenin's theory in *State and Revolution* restored the revolutionary political dimension of Marxism. In a way, Korsch conceived the relationship between Marx and Lenin in a parallel manner to the relation between Marx and Hegel—Lenin, like Marx, expressing a further stage of revolutionary struggle in his work. But here Korsch is operating with an idealized concept of Lenin which has little in common with either the historical Lenin or the Lenin who was being deified and re-tooled by the apologists for Soviet Marxism in Moscow.[16] Most of Lenin's works were not yet available in Europe and Korsch was no doubt unfamiliar with Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, which contained a crude and dogmatic philosophical materialism, copy-theory of knowledge and perception, and correspondence theory of truth which had little in common with Korsch's dialectical conception of Marxism.

Korsch's interpretation of the relation between Marx and Hegel, his appraisal of the importance of philosophy and ideological struggle for socialist revolution, his periodization of Marxism which applies the historical materialist method to the history of Marxism, and his commitment to Leninism can all best be grasped in the context of his *revolutionary historicism*.[17] Korsch's main concern is the *historical rootedness* of all ideas, institutions, and consciousness. Unlike the more sophisticated or brilliant dialecticians such as Lukács, the members of the Frankfurt School, or even Gramsci, Korsch is much more interested in the political consequences of theory and theoretical activity than the strictly philosophical components of his theory. He is above all interested in developing a *revolutionary theory* in defining the relationship of revolutionary theory to political practice. A genuinely revolutionary theory is thus rooted in a revolutionary movement whose struggles, needs, and goals produce the theory, which in turn demonstrates its truth or efficacy in practice. At the time, Korsch believed that Marxism was the authentic expression of proletarian struggle from the time of the 1848 revolutions up to the present day, and that Leninism was the currently actual form of Marxism that expressed contemporary revolutionary struggles.

3. Korsch and the Comintern

While working on *Marxism and Philosophy*, Korsch was also heavily involved in communist politics. He lived in the house where the local

15. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, pp. 70-71.

16. See Antonio Carlo's "Lenin on the Party," *Telos* 17 (Fall 1973), for a discussion of the various phases of Lenin's work and the contradictory positions he often took in different political contexts. Korsch is unaware of or glosses over these contradictions and ambiguities in Lenin's theory and practice, hence his historicized version of Lenin is paradoxically ahistorical.

17. By "historicism" I do not mean the distorted notion operative in the work of Karl Popper. Korsch saw Popper's work as "the newest attack of Positivism against Marxism" which he found "very loathsome." See "A Letter from Karl Korsch," *Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils* (Melbourne: July-August, 1948), pp. 9-10.

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communist newspaper, *Neue Zeitung*, was published and frequently participated in party meetings. In 1923-24 he analyzed the stabilization of monopoly capitalism in Germany, supporting the communist position that in view of the capitalist offensive against the workers, a United Front policy was needed to "seize material goods" and "constitute a workers' government."[18] He attended the Eighth Party Congress of the KPD in Leipzig, January, 1923, and sided with Brandler and the "right-center" majority who sought a united front with the Social Democrats to fight the growing counterrevolution. At this conference Korsch criticized as "undialectical" the left position of Fisher and Maslow who rejected united fronts and urged putting mass-supported armed struggle and the slogan of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" on the top of the agenda.[19]

In 1923 the German economic situation grew progressively worse as inflation raged and hunger strikes broke out all over the land. The Weimar government appeared incapable of dealing with the massive economic crisis and growing political unrest. To add to the explosiveness of the situation both the right and the left were arming their supporters to prepare for combat. Korsch, in fact, was in charge of drilling local members of the KPD to form a proletarian army (*Hundertschaften*). It appeared that any day new revolutionary uprisings would emerge and after much debate the Russian leaders of the Comintern ordered the KPD to prepare for civil war.[20] The opportunity for armed confrontation with the ruling powers soon arrived. On October 10, 1923, the SPD and KPD formed a coalition government in Saxony and three days later they united in Thuringen to form a workers' government. Korsch was named justice minister in Thuringen and began an active political career that was to place him at the center of German politics for the next several years. The new coalition government demanded arms for the workers to protect the government from the danger of invasion by fascist troops from Bavaria. Their program called for the nationalization of heavy industry, the regulation of foreign commerce, control commissions and new laws to protect the workers, control of the police, exclusion of reactionaries from public posts, etc. The bourgeoisie panicked.[21]

Although the workers' governments in Saxony and Thuringen were legal, constitutional governments formed according to Weimar parliamentary law, the Weimar government, with the complicity of the SPD, sent the army into central Germany and threatened to dissolve the Saxony government on the pretext that they refused to abolish their red armies.[22] Korsch called the

18. See "Der 18. Brumaire des Hugo Stinnes" and "Die tote USPD und der lebendige Stinnes" in Karl Korsch, *Politische Texte, op.cit.*

19. See "Um die Arbeiterregierung," in *ibid.*

20. See Ruth Fisher, *German Communism and Stalin, op.cit.*, pp. 252-383, for a detailed account of the unrest and chaos in Germany and a description of the Byzantine machinations of the German and Russian communists to exploit the situation.

21. Flechtheim, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-190, ironically comments that "the experiment of a socialist-communist government was only to shake the world for ten days," and suggests that its major accomplishment was the distribution of free carp to the unemployed.

22. The most detailed account of the complicated political maneuvering behind the scenes by

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workers to assemble for armed struggle to protect their government as they had done against the Kapp putsch. He and others called for a general strike and barricades against the advancing government troops. The SPD leaders refused to take this course of action, however, and Brandler and other right-center leaders of the KPD hesitated to recommend any decisive action. As a result, when the Reichswehr arrived, the workers' government in Saxony and Thuringen collapsed and government troops occupied the region. Korsch was forced to go underground and could only safely emerge when an amnesty was granted. A period of active revolutionary struggle in Germany was now over and the counterrevolutionary forces were to increase their hegemony and prepare the way for the triumph of fascism.

The debacle of the workers' government marked the end of a working class offensive and began a period of capitalist stabilization. Korsch, as always, drew theoretical-political conclusions from these events. He and the majority of militants in the KPD decided that coalitions with the hopelessly reformist Social Democrats were impossible and that a Leninist type party and tactics were needed to create an effective revolutionary movement in Germany. At this point, Korsch began a period of thoroughly dogmatic Leninism in which he tried to apply the Leninist theory and practice in every way possible to the situation in Germany. Korsch now sided with the new "left" leadership of Maslow and Fisher, who at the Frankfurt Party Day in April, 1924, urged developing a Leninist line for struggle for state power and urged as the goal the dictatorship of the proletariat under KPD leadership.[23] Ironically, Korsch and his left colleagues' enthusiastic embrace of Leninism and the Bolshevizing of the KPD was to result in the domination of the German movement by the Soviet Union and in the purging of the very left forces who spearheaded the Bolshevization process.

The need for a Leninist party and tactics was believed to be justified by the defeat of the coalition governments and the rise of a new fascist threat. Korsch had concluded in February 1924 that "fascism" had triumphed over the November Revolution and subscribed to the "social fascism" thesis. This saw the social democrats as "nothing but a fraction of German fascism with socialist phraseology" and labelled the whole social democratic movement as a species of fascism.[24] Korsch's acceptance of the "social fascist" thesis was probably

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the Weimar government in deciding how to deal with the revolutionary threat is found in Angress, *op.cit.*, pp. 406ff. See Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 49ff. and the SED Autorenkollektiv, *Der I. und II. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (East Berlin, 1959), Vol. II, pp. 21ff.

23. For an account of the rise to power of the left Fisher-Maslow leadership, cf. Fisher, *op.cit.*, pp. 387-455 and Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 53ff.

24. Stenographic report on the meeting of the Third Landstag in Thuringen, Vol. I (Weimar, 1924), cited in Buckmiller, *op.cit.*, pp. 56-57. Here Korsch describes "fascism" as "the consciously planned counterrevolution of the bourgeoisie that in some lands today is carried along predominantly by lower middle class groups, while in other lands, like ours, it is led by the upper bourgeoisie themselves and their paid agents. . . this counterrevolution in all its forms we call by the new word fascism and what we have experienced in the last months was the progressive and consequent attempt to shift this counterrevolution into the saddle. . . and to stabilize it." This thesis was initially launched by Zinoviev who declared "German Social-Democracy is a fascistic Social-Democracy," and who coined the term "social fascism" to describe the Social-Democrats. See

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motivated by extreme bitterness over social democratic opportunism since November 1918 and the refusal of the social democrats to support any militant revolutionary action. Indeed, in the view of Korsch and others, social democratic opportunism and treachery were responsible, in part at least, for a whole string of working class defeats from the collapse of the workers' councils movement up to the recent refusal to support any militant action in the October (1923) crisis, which had resulted in the crushing of the workers' movement in central Germany and the temporary outlawing of the Communist Party.[25] Korsch's adherence to the Comintern fascist theory and concept of social fascism is another indication of his orthodoxy at that time.

Korsch saw the Dawes plan in 1924—which would regulate German reparation payments from World War I and would loan foreign capital (mostly American) to German industry—as a tactic to stabilize capitalism and the counterrevolution in Germany. He believed this plan signified increased suffering and exploitation for the German proletariat, who would have to submit to intensified rationalization of labor (speed-ups, technological unemployment, increased domination, etc.) and longer working hours.[26] He agreed with the KPD notion of a "revolutionary total perspective" that portrayed the present as a brief period of calm between "two waves of revolution." The task at hand was thus to prepare for new working class offensives.

Korsch was rewarded for his defense of Leninism and the Bolshevization of the Communist International with the editorship of the *Internationale*—the major German communist theoretrical journal—and a position on the KPD central committee.[27] The period of 1924-27 was a fateful one for the communist movement in which the destinies of the German and Russian communist parties were ever more closely linked. After the death of Lenin a brutal power struggle was going on in the Soviet Union, while in Germany the old antagonisms between the communists and social democrats, and the left and the right, were intensifying and creating a confusing, complex situation.

Zinoviev's speech to the central committee of the Communist International, January, 1924; printed in *Imprekorr* 37 (March, 1924), pp. 426f. For a historical account of the "social fascist" concept see Siegfried Bahne, "Sozialfaschismus in Deutschland," *International Review of Social History* X (1965), Part 2, pp. 211ff.

25. For a summary of a number of books which blame the defeat of the workers' councils movement and the November revolution on social-democratic opportunism, cf. Brian Peterson, "Workers' Councils in Germany," *New German Critique* 4 (Winter 1975). According to Korsch: "The fateful failure of our politics in the year 1923 consisted entirely in the fact that although we theoretically recognized the identically 'fascistic' nature of social democracy and all other bourgeois 'democrats' with Hitler's fascism in virtue of its class content, we failed to draw from this knowledge correct consequences in our practical action with adequate decisiveness." Cited in Buckmiller, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

26. See Karl Korsch, "Das Wortlaut des Dawes und McKenna Berichts" and "Die Durchführung des Dawes-Gutachtens und den Kampf um den Achtstundestag," in *Kommentäre zur deutschen 'Revolution,' op.cit.*

27. Hermann Weber writes that in the months after the Frankfurt Party Day (April 7-10, 1924), Korsch was one of the leaders of the KPD and was in charge of ideological affairs. Cf. Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 74-75.

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Under these difficult conditions, Korsch and others had high hopes that the Communist International would be able to unite the demoralized revolutionary forces. In June-July of 1924, Korsch was a delegate to the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow, which posed for itself the task of developing Leninism as a unitary ideological foundation for all parties in the International. Korsch shared the Comintern's aim of carrying out social revolution in Europe "in the spirit of Lenin." His contribution to the Congress, "Lenin and the Comintern," portrays Leninism as the "restored and fulfilled method of revolutionary Marxist science that is essentially the theoretical consciousness of the revolutionary action of the Proletariat class." Korsch attacked the right-center ideologue Thälheimer for reducing Marxism to a "purely historical-experimental science and practice"—implicitly arguing that Leninism can also be applied to Germany, that it is not bound to the specific conditions of the Soviet Union but expresses real historical tendencies of proletarian revolution in Germany.[28] Here Korsch's Leninist orthodoxy is thoroughgoing.

But the Korsch-legend paints another picture. E.H. Carr, in his influential history of the Russian revolution, claims that Korsch's article "Lenin and the Comintern," "under the guise of an orthodox attack from the Left on Brandler and the Right, by implication denounced the whole united front policy and the current Comintern line as a surrender of the Marxist dialectic of revolution to pragmatism and expediency."[29] According to Carr, the article is part of "the extension of the ultra-left campaign in the KPD against the policies of the Comintern and especially against the tactic of the United Front." Carr's claims are bizarre for there is no denunciation of the Comintern at all in the article and in fact, as Carr's own account indicates, the KPD and the Comintern itself sharply turned to the left at the Fifth World Congress and denounced the previous United Front policy!—a position Korsch shared. Nor is there any evidence at all to categorize Korsch as part of the ultra-left as Carr and others are prone to do.

Building on Carr's erroneous analysis, Breines claims that "Korsch went on to call for the erection of a 'protective wall against the rising flood of Communist revisionism' and to clearly insist upon the necessity of independence from rigid Moscow hegemony over the various European Communist parties."[30] Korsch nowhere criticizes "rigid Moscow hegemony" at the time, nor does he call for the independence of the German party. On the contrary, he is thoroughly in favor of the Bolshevization policy and is supporting the Comintern line. In fact, after the World Congress, Korsch

28. Karl Korsch, "Lenin und die Komintern," *Internationale* 10-11 (June, 1924); reprinted in Karl Korsch, *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung und andere Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 137ff. Here Korsch also defends the Leninist theory of the party and attacks Luxemburg's "onesidedness" and "painful excess of subjectivism."

29. E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country 1924-26*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 110.

30. Paul Breines, "Praxis and its Theorists," *Telos* 11 (Spring 1972), p. 91. Breines cites and accepts Carr's misreading, as does Russell Jacoby in "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism," *Telos* 10 (Winter 1971), p. 121.

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identified the Communist International and the interests of the world's working classes with "the proletarian state of Soviet Russia," just as he identified Leninism with the world proletarian struggles (i.e., as their theoretical consciousness): "All measures and actions of Soviet Russia will be dictated by interests of the Communist movement for the liberation of the world proletariat. There is in Russia no dualism between state and proletarian class interests."[31] During 1924 Korsch continually defended Leninist orthodoxy and attacked the ideological currents which were the main threat to the dominant line.

Korsch's orthodoxy is crystal clear in his enthusiastic review of Lukács' celebration of Lenin and his rapturous praise of Stalin's book "Lenin and Leninism." In the former, Korsch seconds Lukács' affirmation of Lenin's theses on "the actuality of the revolution," "the proletariat as the decisive revolutionary class," the Leninist theory of the party and state and Leninist "revolutionary Realpolitik" tactics.[32] In his essay on Stalin's book, Korsch is effusive with praise for Comrade Stalin and even has some kind words for Bela Kun. He praises the process of Bolshevization begun at the Fifth Congress and claims that "Bolshevization is now practically and theoretically spreading below and is for the first time encompassing the inner structure of the Party's body down to its individual cell."[33] In carrying through the Leninist task, he appraises Comrade Stalin's book in its "crystal clarity" and the "imaginative power of its language" as being of great use, for through Comrade Stalin's work we can grasp "*Marxism as Leninism*, as the 'theory of revolution' in the epoch of imperialism." In fact, Korsch repeats Stalin's suggestion that we can dispense with studying the texts of Marx and learn Marxism in its "fully-developed form" from Lenin!

31. *Neue Zeitung* 123 (August 11, 1924). Moreover, the "revisionism" against which Korsch wished to build a "protective wall" was "right" revisionism such as that of the Brandlerite Thälheimer, as well as the "left" deviations of Trotsky and Luxemburg. In an essay "Leninismus und Trotzkismus," Korsch wrote, "along with Luxemburgism we must exterminate any Trotskyism in us." Cf. also *Neue Zeitung* 50 (February 28, 1925), and also, "Trotsky als Geschichtsschreiber," *Neue Zeitung* 221-2 (December 4-5, 1924). Korsch's attitude toward Luxemburg can be taken as a key to his position. Whereas in *Marxism and Philosophy* Luxemburg is along with Lenin one of the great restorers of genuine Marxism, in Korsch's fanatic Leninist period, she is one of the enemies of Leninism whom he frequently attacks. As soon as he moves into the left opposition, he again refers favorably to Luxemburg.

32. Both these articles are reprinted in *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, *op.cit.* Interestingly, both Lukács and Korsch agree that the Leninist theory of the state posits "proletarian workers' councils" as the "proletarian counter-government." Here is an issue where one might be able to claim that Korsch (and Lukács) pushes the workers' councils concept as a rear-guard action to counter the Bolshevik's suppression of the Soviets, thus challenging the hegemony of the party. But since the soviets were still part of the Bolshevik's current ideology, Korsch wasn't really being "oppositional" or subversive in pushing the Soviets as the authentic form of "proletarian countergovernment." In fact, the Russians themselves had undertaken a campaign to enliven the Soviets. See Carr, *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. II, pp. 304ff. I might note that an article which Korsch earlier published indicated that he believed that there really was a councils' system operative in the Soviet Union. See "Die Verwaltung der Produktion durch die Arbeiter in Sowjetrussland," *Neue Zeitung* 24 (January 29, 1920), and 27 (February 1, 1920).

33. Karl Korsch, "Stalin: Lenin und Leninismus," *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, *op.cit.*, p. 152.

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Korsch's writings from 1920-1925 give no indication that he was building a left-oppositional current or that he saw himself as a dissident to communist theory or practice. During this period he consistently defended the Soviet Union as the "bulwark of the revolution" and defended the NEP, the doctrine of socialism in one country, and the identification of the destiny of the Soviet Union with the world revolution.[34] How, then, did the legend arise that already in 1923-24 Korsch was a left-oppositionalist who represented a heretical current at the Fifth World Congress of the Comintern? First, it is clear in retrospect that *Marxism and Philosophy* and Korsch's theoretical writings present a dialectical version of Marxism that was to conflict in various ways with the developing Soviet Marxism, especially in areas of methodology, epistemology and metaphysics where the Korsch-Lukács positions constituted a critique of the crude Soviet attempts to create an objectivist "scientific socialism," a metaphysical materialism, and a copy-theory of knowledge (and simplistic correspondence theory of truth). It is on these grounds that Zinoviev carried out his infamous "critique" of Korsch at the Fifth Congress that no doubt contributed much to the myth of Korsch the ultra-leftist and the creator of an oppositionalist current.[35]

Zinoviev's address at the Congress on "The Struggle against the Ultra-Lefts and Theoretical Revisionism" represents an attempt of the Bolsheviks to create a "scientific socialism" that portrayed Marxism as an objectivistic science of the laws of history. Zinoviev's "critique" consists of anti-intellectual denunciations of the "professors" (Korsch, Lukács, etc.) and the application of derogatory labels like "idealist deviation" to Korsch and others. What was happening under the cloak of a "philosophical dispute" was the beginning of the Bolshevik's heavy-handed attempt to bully all sections of the International into submission to all Bolshevik theories and policies.

As the Congress went on, Zinoviev stepped up his bullying tactics. He offered Korsch, as an editor of the *Internationale*, the "friendly advice" "to study Marxism and Leninism" and even went so far as to suggest that the KPD put its journal "in the hands of Marxists" rather than "those who still need to study Marxism."[36] It appeared that the Bolsheviks were angered that Korsch had allowed an article by Boris (Roniger) to be published which deigned to criticize Bukharin and the theory of the labor aristocracy. Out of Korsch's confrontation with Bukharin and Zinoviev no doubt emerged the "left-oppositionalist" myth. The myth was fueled by (unsubstantiated) rumors that Korsch cried out from the floor "Soviet Imperialism" during a speech at the

34. See Buckmiller, *op.cit.*, p. 61 for relevant citations.

35. See Breines' detailed account of Zinoviev's attack on Korsch and Lukács in "Praxis and its Theorists," *op.cit.*, pp. 82-92. I do not think that Breines is warranted in claiming that "there is no question that Korsch's emerging political opposition loomed large in the thinking of Zinoviev and the 'Bolshevizers' " (p. 91), for Korsch's political opposition had in no way emerged and he was a "Bolshevizer" himself. Nor is there any evidence that Zinoviev possessed ESP. Ruth Fisher offers some fascinating insights into Zinoviev, *op.cit.*, pp. 544ff and *passim*. For Carr's portrait of Zinoviev, cf. *Socialism in One Country, op.cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 152ff.

36. Weber, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

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Congress.[37] In fact, however, it seems that Korsch actually sided with the Soviet leadership and the KPD leadership on all major political issues of the time, suppressing his theoretical differences with the newly emerging Bolshevik orthodoxy.

One might wonder from what theoretical position Korsch could support Leninism and the Bolshevization of the Communist International. If the negative effects of Bolshevization were so clear, why did Korsch so assiduously toe the Party line throughout 1924 and much of 1925? The answer lies in the form of revolutionary historicism that underlies Korsch's theoretical position and drove him to identify with and support those tendencies which represented real forces of revolution. It should be noted that this is far from being a left-oppositionalist position which puts theory above history and reality, and criticizes a situation because it fails to meet the demands of theory. Rather, the theory is judged through its efficacy in transforming reality. Leninism, Korsch believed, had done those things and provided the correct theory and strategy that made possible the Russian revolution. This historicist tendency thus led Korsch to affirm Leninism as revolutionary reality. But the limits of both this theory and Leninism itself were soon forced upon Korsch by the ruthless Stalinization of the Soviet and German Communist movement.

4. Korsch in the Left Opposition

Both the German and Soviet Communist Parties became engaged in bitter, internecine party struggles in 1925. The German party had refused coalitions with the social democrats and in the 1925 election ran their own candidate, "Teddy" Thälmann.[38] Since no candidate had received the requisite majority there was to be a run-off election. The right chose the reactionary General Hindenberg as their candidate, and the communists had to decide whether to join in a coalition with the social democrats to oppose the "monarchist danger" or to continue their rejection of United Fronts and run their own candidate again. The party was bitterly divided on this issue and after acrimonious debates decided, with the Comintern's prodding, to support the social

37. The source for this story is Gustav Hilger, a former Nazi (!) diplomat. See *The Incompatible Allies* (New York, 1953), p. 108. Carr repeats the story, noting that the remark does not appear in the German edition of Hilger's book, and states, "but the fact is well attested." Cf. *Socialism in One Country*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 78. Breines repeats the story in his "Praxis and its Theorists," *op.cit.*, p. 92. I have yet to discover any substantial evidence for this story. In his introduction to *Marxism and Philosophy*, *op.cit.*, p. 19, Fred Halliday contributes a story that "the Comintern Congress revealed Korsch's growing break with the Fisher-Maslow group. They later allied themselves with the Russian leadership while Korsch formed an opposition bloc with the Italian left faction led by Bordiga." This is nonsense, for Korsch was supporting the Fisher-Maslow leadership at the time (he was part of the leadership!). Although Korsch met Bordiga at the Congress, there is no evidence that they thought of forming an international opposition bloc, nor did they actually do so later. Correspondence between Korsch and Bordiga after Korsch was expelled from the KPD indicates there were insurmountable obstacles to forming an international opposition bloc. See Bordiga's letter to Korsch and Christian Riecher's commentary in *Ueber Karl Korsch, op.cit.*, pp. 243-265.

38. For portraits of Thälmann, later to be the leading communist politician in Germany during the Stalinist era, see Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 186ff., and Fisher, *op.cit.*, pp. 423ff.

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democrat candidate. But when the social democrats decided to support a center party candidate, the Communists ran Thälmann again.

In a close vote, Hindenberg won the election and the SPD accused the Communists of having helped Hindenberg gain power by their failure to support the left-center candidate. At this point, the "left" leaders Fisher and Maslow, supported by the Comintern, urged the KPD to enter a new United Front under the slogan of the "monarchist danger." Simultaneously the Soviet Union intensified its Machiavellian machinations to control the KPD through purging independent, non-submissive members. Although Korsch did not join the first wave of left-oppositionalists who opposed the "new line" (capitalist stabilization, monarchist danger, United Front), the Comintern leaders began attacking Korsch and demanded his removal from the *Internationale*. Bela Kun, in charge of the Agitprop division of the Comintern, wrote the KPD Central Committee a letter ordering them to tighten controls over the journal, particularly in regard to the "Russian question."[39] Korsch offered to resign but his comrades unanimously urged him to stay on. Under continued attack from Kun and other Stalinist hatchetmen, Korsch finally resigned with a parting shot at Kun who "from whatever grounds accuses those out-of-favor party comrades as being pigs who are enemies of the party and who treats their works as crap."[40]

After being removed from the *Internationale* and the KPD Central Committee, Korsch began to develop a critique that would eventually get him expelled from the party and push him into the forefront of the left-opposition. In a subtle but forceful critique of the united front policy, he wrote "Karl Marx über Republik und Monarchie" which argued that for Marx the natural ally of the proletariat is not necessarily the "republican" strata of the bourgeoisie in the struggle against monarchy.[41] He cited Marx that the workers must learn that " 'the slightest improvement of its situation remains a *Utopia within* the bourgeois republic—a Utopia that becomes a crime as soon as it wants to realize itself'."[42] The real choice, Korsch suggested, was not between Republic or Monarchy, but between the rule of the bourgeoisie or their overthrow in

39. Kun's letter attacking Korsch and the *Internationale*—a classic piece of Bolshevik stupidity—is reproduced in *Kommentäre zur deutschen 'Revolution,' op.cit.*, pp. 131-136. Kun criticizes issues 6-22 of the 1924 *Internationale*. He found discussions of the Dawes Plan and the Fifth World Congress good, but found 95% of the material blameworthy: "The *Internationale* shows no consequent revolutionary-Marxist (Leninist) line." For example, next to "a good article" of Maslow (that criticizes Trotsky) there is a "bad article" "that is grist to Trotsky's mill." Kun demands, "What is the opinion of the editorial staff?" "Further examples" (of bad articles) "are offered by all of the reviews of Comrade Lukács which *represent true paradigms of dead abstract critique that rests on purely verbal Marxism* [*Wortmarxismus*]." Kun is referring to Lukács' "The New Edition of Lassalle's Letters," translated in *Telos* 11 (Spring 1972), and to "Bernstein's Triumph," dismissed by Kun as "a purely formalistic critique of Kautsky," Kun continues, "One cannot at the same time be for Stalin's book *Lenin and Leninism* and on the other hand for such un-Marxist things as Korsch's *Quintessenz des Marxismus* and Lukács' work. *One must decide.*" See Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 101ff. and Ruth Fisher, *op.cit.*, pp. 421ff. for an account of this period.

40. *Neue Zeitung* 66 (March 21, 1925); cited in Buckmiller, p. 68.

41. *Neue Zeitung* 95 (April 27, 1925); cited in Buckmiller, p. 65.

42. Marx, "Class Struggle in France 1848-50," cited in *ibid.*

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creating the dictatorship of the proletariat, understood as a "red councils republic."[43] Hence, for Korsch, the real choice was between Lenin or Hindenberg.

In a discussion group in Weimar, June, 1925, Korsch rejected the thesis—pushed by the Comintern and their KPD flunkies—that there was a distinctive difference between the purportedly feudal land-owning class and industrial capitalist in Germany and that the proletariat should side with the more progressive capitalists to destroy the last remnants of feudalism. Korsch argued that there was no more feudalism in Germany and that both capitalist classes carried out their quest for profit on the basis of capitalist relations of production; thus, Korsch argued, the real class struggle in Germany was between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. Implicit in this analysis was the claim that the united front policy based on the need to unite with the progressive bourgeoisie to fight the monarchist and feudalist elements was a surrender of the revolutionary perspective and was based on a false analysis of the situation in Germany.[44]

None of Korsch's writings from 1920-25 contains any criticism of the Soviet Union and all adhere faithfully to Leninism. There is no evidence that Korsch *openly* opposed the political position or the leadership of the Soviet Union, Comintern, or KPD until September 1925 (his criticisms from April-August 1925 were carried out on a purely theoretical level).[45] It was not until the delivery of a letter from the Soviet Union to its German "comrades" criticizing the German left leadership (Fisher, Maslow, etc.) and demanding a new leadership and closer conformity to Russian policies that Korsch changed. This letter hit the German movement like a bombshell and drove Korsch into resolute opposition. The open letter also had the effect of shattering the German movement into various factions and thus contributed to the attempt of the Russian communists to totally dominate the German party.

Kosch aggressively came out as a left-oppositionalist for the first time at a party conference in Frankfurt on September 6, 1925, a few days after publication of the open letter. He energetically attacked the line of the new

43. Karl Korsch, "Republik Hindenberg," *Neue Zeitung* 95 (April 27, 1925).

44. Buckmiller claims that at this conference Korsch for the first time can be characterized as "ultra-left." Cf. Buckmiller, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

45. Hence, Halliday, in his introduction to *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, p. 19, is wrong when he states that: "In February 1925 he was dismissed from the editorship of *Die Internationale* and from then onwards was in declared opposition to the Party leadership." Bathrick, in his "Introduction to Korsch," *New German Critique* 3 (Fall 1974), p. 4, is also incorrect in claiming that "Beginning in 1924, first as editor of the KPD's central organ *Die Internationale* and finally as a member of various splinter groups outside the Party itself, Korsch waged an unending battle against Russian domination of the German Communist movement." The facts are that it was not until the publication of the so-called "Open Letter" of the Executive Committee of the Comintern to the KPD in late August 1925 that Korsch openly joined the left opposition and waged his "unending battle" against the Stalinists. Cf. Weber's discussion of this masterpiece of Stalinist Byzantinism, *op.cit.*, pp. 120-133. Ruth Fisher describes the power politics behind the document in the Soviet Union as a struggle between Stalin and Zinoviev, and claims she signed the document to support Zinoviev against Stalin, even though it contained her own political death warrant, *op.cit.*, pp. 444ff.

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KPD leadership (the Thälmann-Dengler group) that in the case of a conflict of interests between the Soviet Union and the Comintern, the revolutionary politics of the KPD must be dampened to accord with Soviet interests. Korsch reportedly described this policy as "red imperialism" and was promptly attacked by the communist newspapers as a traitor "whose views coincide completely with the inflammatory articles of the social democratic and imperialist press."[46] Korsch denied that he was "anti-Bolshevik" and argued that his position was misrepresented; he even repeated his belief that the Soviet Union was the "bulwark of the revolution"[47] until he was driven out of the party. Thus, Korsch was one of the first victims of the new Stalinist smear and purge tactics that were to eliminate many of the most dedicated Marxists from the Russian and German revolutionary movement. In a remarkable display of power politics, Stalin and his cronies in the KPD were to eliminate all opposition and to splinter the communist movement into a tragicomic battleground of warring factions and sects.[48] The "Stalinization" of the German Communist Party, parallel to the process in the Soviet Union, constituted a decisive change from a party organization that had been from the beginning relatively democratic, independent of the Soviet Union, open, and full of all tendencies from "left" to "right."[49] These days were over and now a "monolithic party of a new sort" was being constructed that became in effect a tool of the Stalinist leadership and the Soviet Union.

Afterward, Korsch rapidly became a nonentity in Communist circles. The party newspapers attacked him constantly and refused to print his articles. He was heckled by goon squads when he tried to speak out at communist rallies, and he was not allowed to participate in party discussions. Either by choice or interdiction he did not participate in the November 1, 1925 Party Congress that officially voted the Thälmann leadership in and the Fisher-Maslow leadership out. At about this time, Korsch made contact with various left-oppositionalists and attended an ultra-left conference in Hanover in January, 1926, after which he formed a group called the "decisive left" (*die Entscheidene Linke*).[50]

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46. In "Nieder mit dem kleinbürgerlichen anti-bolschewistischen Geist!" *Die Rote Fahne* 218 (September 13, 1925). Reproduced in Karl Korsch, *Politische Texte, op.cit.*, pp. 70-71.

47. *Die Rote Fahne* 223 (September 27, 1925). Korsch was continually slandered in the vilest terms by the Stalinist hacks. The Party newspaper *Die Rote Fahne* characterized him successively as a "victim of social democratic propaganda" (September 19, 1925); an enemy of the Soviet Union (September 22); a traitor who was part of an "anti-Bolshevik" bloc (September 23), and so on until Korsch was made a symbol of communism's enemies.

48. See Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 133ff.; Fisher, *op.cit.*, pp. 432ff.; and Siegfried Bahne, "Zwischen 'Luxemburgismus' und 'Stalinismus': Die 'ultralinke' Opposition in der KPD," *Vierteljahresheft für Zeitgeschichte* 9 (1961), pp. 359-383.

49. Flechtheim and Weber stress this, as does Fisher. Werner Angress in *Stillborn Revolution* sees the fall of party democracy in the KPD as a move from Luxemburg to Leninism that took place in the early 1920s.

50. Weber, *op.cit.*, pp. 133ff. Weber reports: "At this conference there were distinctive differences of opinion; Scholem, Rosenberg, and their followers turned away from the sharp demands that were raised above all by Korsch and Schwartz who not only directed heavy attacks against the Soviet Union and the Comintern, but also called for unconditional work with Katz in

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Of the left opposition Korsch was one of the least sectarian and tried to continuously work for the unity of the left, first inside and then outside of the party. When Katz stormed the Hanover newspaper with 200 supporters after they refused to publish his views and was subsequently kicked out of the party—the first ultraleftist to be purged—Korsch tried to work with Katz and his newly formed *Spartakusbund*, although at the same time he signed a document with other leftists on the Katz-question which affirmed the slogans: "No step against the party!... Unconditional recognition of party discipline... All for the unity of the party!" Korsch even agreed to work with the Fisher-Maslow group against the wishes of Schwartz and others. To provide an organ for their views, Korsch and his fellow leftists began to publish a journal *Kommunistische Politik* in Marcy 1926 which was largely edited and financed by Korsch. On April 2, 1926, the "decisive left" met to discuss oppositional strategy and the KPD central committee "concentrated their struggle against the Korsch-Schwartz group," directing their main artillery against Korsch.[51]

There were struggles all through Germany between the left and the Stalinists for control of the local party organization and there were even street battles between the followers of the Thälmann central committee and left oppositionalists. Now at the center of the left opposition, Karl Korsch was to develop the most penetrating critique of the "theories" that the Stalinists were using to legitimate their activities, and was to focus on the degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union under the Stalinists. The Bolsheviks in turn were to wage an all-out campaign against Professor Korsch whom Zinoviev now described as a "wildgewordene Kleinburger" (a petty bourgeois gone mad).[52]

The platform of the Korsch-Schwartz group published in April 1926 began by attacking the "relative stabilization" of capitalism thesis which the Stalinists used to justify their "right" united front policy. Korsch's group discerned tendencies toward destabilization and crisis which meant that *"all objective elements for a concrete revolutionary politics"* are at hand.[53] Although the platform designated the winning of the majority of the most advanced sections of the working class as their goal, they also hoped to mobilize the millions of unemployed and other oppressed classes. They took a broad internationalist perspective and called for the support and unity of "all exploited groups, the

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order to preserve the unity of the ultraleft. Scholem and Rosenberg believed that such a position would lead to the split of the KPD and were therefore against it. After a sharp exchange of words, Scholem, Rosenberg and their followers left the conference."

51. Weber, *ibid.*, pp. 150 and 416-417. On the program of Katz's attempt to resurrect the Spartacus League, cf. Bahne, *op.cit.*, pp. 366ff.

52. Cited in Bahne, *op.cit.*, p. 371.

53. "Platform of the Left," in *Politische Texte*, p. 105. This platform urged intensified struggle to gain "revolutionary control of production" and attacked the "parliamentary cretinism" of the KPD, urging the workers to struggle for the control of production "supported by revolutionary workers' councils." Korsch and his colleagues were returning to the workers' councils concept that they had previously relegated to a secondary position in their commitment to the Party and participation in party politics. Actually Korsch had never abandoned the workers' councils concept which he was to defend as the authentic organ of socialism until the end of his life.

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poor farmers, in Russia, the oppressed people of India and Africa, all parts of the middle classes in Europe and America." *Kommunistische Politik* devoted several articles to revolution in China and what is today called the Third World; Korsch was to consistently maintain a broad internationalist revolutionary perspective.[54] In August, 1926, Korsch and his friends were to call for a "new Zimmerwald" conference that would unite into an international left opposition movement all opponents of Stalinism under Lenin's motto, "Against the Stream." Korsch in fact continuously worked toward the unity of the left opposition and he must have been bitterly disappointed at the continual factionalism and splintering.

In short, *Kommunistische Politik* wanted to "restore" authentic Marxist theory and practice, both of which they believed were being perverted by the Soviet and German Stalinists. They argued that the KPD and Comintern were taking social democratic positions on the most important questions and were engaged in the same reformist practice and falling prey to the same dislocation between theory and practice that had vitiated the social democrats. Moreover, the lack of "party democracy" and freedom of discussion were destroying the very fiber of the communist movement. Above all, the submission of the KPD to the hegemony of the Soviet Union was destroying the German party by involving it in the bizarre inter-party struggles going on in the Soviet Union. These criticisms were not received with equanimity by the Stalinists.

5. The Expulsion from the Party

In February 1926 the Comintern set up a "German Commission" to study the "German question" and called a conference to answer Korsch and the left opposition's critique of the Soviet Union. In his speech, Bukharin claimed that Korsch's thesis of a "state necessity" which sacrificed the interests of the world proletariat to the Soviet Union's interests was a "phantom of the brain" and "had nothing in common with communism." The alleged turn to the right was "absolutely slanderous and untrue." The ideas of the left opposition had under left masks "a really half-social democratic, half-bourgeois ideology" and must therefore "be exterminated root and branch."[55] Stalin, in his first appearance before the Comintern, said he wanted to register his "complete solidarity" with the "excellent speech" by Comrade Bukharin and warned the comrades against the ideas of the *speissbürgerlichen Philosophen Korsch* (the petty bourgeois philosopher). Stalin defended the central committee of the KPD as a "truly Leninist committee" and said that its lack of theoreticians was "no great unhappiness." Intellectuals who stir up trouble should be "thrown to the devil!"

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54. *Kommunistische Politik*, I:2, p. 19. See also the article on China, "Die Chinesische Revolution," *Politische Texte*, pp. 160ff. Hedda Korsch writes that Korsch "also went deeply into the problems of what today would be called the Third World. He studied the development of the various colonial countries because he thought that the liberation of the colonies was perhaps imminent and could change world politics completely," *op.cit.*, p. 43.

55. Bukharin in *Die Rote Fahne*, April 11, 1926; in Weber, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

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"Ultra-left sickness" must be rooted out and the party must be restored to (proletarian) health.[56]

Korsch stepped up his attack on the Soviet Union and the process of Stalinization which was at the root of the degeneration of the communist movement. He was invited to present his views at a conference in Berlin on April 16-17, 1926. He was literally fighting for his political life, as Thälmann had announced to his face in public that "the party's patience is exhausted. We shall find ways and means to totally liquidate you."[57] In the remarkable speech "The Way of the Comintern," which Korsch presented to a hostile audience, he began by saying that he was going to pose "the basic questions of revolution" and to avoid the pseudo-questions that had muddled previous debates. He wished to make clear his "oppositional position" that had been so badly distorted and slandered in the party press. He challenged his audience that they could have a "pogrom or a discussion" and if they wanted a discussion they should focus on the issues he was raising.[58]

Korsch argued that the main issue was a decisive turn in the policy of the Comintern that required posing the "Russian question" which the Stalinists had attempted to hide and suppress. The problem was a degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union itself. Every attempt had been made, Korsch claimed, to cover up the "struggle between two tendencies:" "a peasant oriented, opportunist tendency," supported by Stalin and Bukharin, and "a worker oriented revolutionary counter-tendency," supported by the Leningrad workers' group and Zinoviev. The great danger was that *"within our Soviet brother party, opportunism has already gained the upper hand."* Stalin's thesis of "socialism in one country" and his opportunist politics were condemned as a "falsification of true Leninist theory." To combat this degeneration, Korsch agreed with Bordiga that "the European parties are the best guardians against the opportunist danger in Russia." The roots of Soviet opportunism are, Korsch continued, a "degeneration of Leninist theory" that can be compared to the revisionism of Bernstein and Kautsky after the war: "One can best characterize the essence of this new phase of development of the Marxist-Leninist theory" of Stalin and Bukharin as " 'Bernsteinism' and 'Kautskyism' *after the seizure of power.*" This degeneration of communist theory expressed itself above all in a suppression of "the question of the *final goal* of communism and the *revolutionary* way to this goal." Korsch concluded: "All good communists must in this period take the clear and decisive position: No Kautskyist glossing over of antitheses, but serious struggle aiming at the complete defeat and annihilation of the opportunist and reformist tendency that is currently advancing."

The party leadership responded to this stinging critique with the demand that Korsch give up his seat in the Reichstag. Korsch refused, saying that he

56. Stalin, *Werke*, Vol. 8, p. 102; in Weber, *op.cit.*, p. 146.
57. Thälmann, *Die Rote Fahne*, April 23, 1926; cited in *Politische Texte*, p. 70.
58. "Der Weg der Komintern," *Politische Texte, op.cit.*, pp. 73ff.

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must first discuss the matter with his friends. This was taken as a provocation and "open faction-building," and Korsch was thrown out of the meeting. The "resolute left" was holding a meeting the same day with other left oppositional groups and the communists discussed throwing all the "ultra-lefts" out of the party. The oppositionalists were labelled "anti-Bolsheviks" and Korsch's attempt to work together with other leftists in the Comintern such as the Norwegian Hansen and Bordiga was condemned as particularly danmable. The Stalinists concluded: "It must be demanded that this pestilence of boils (*Pestbeule*) be cut out."[59]

At the end of April 1926, the KPD's central committee undertook a campaign to throw Korsch out of the party and to make him a symbol of communism's enemies. The party demanded again that Korsch give up his Reichstag seat and Korsch refused,[60] after which the German party leadership swiftly voted Korsch out in May, when he refused to go along with the Soviet-German friendship treaty. The decision was confirmed by the Comintern on June 26, 1926.

Korsch now sharpened his attack against the Soviet Union and the Stalinist leadership. The Soviet Union was no longer a "proletarian dictatorship" but a "dictatorship against the proletariat, a dictatorship of Kulaks." The Comintern was termed a "czarist, bonapartist apparatus" of violence with "Prussian-Wilhelmish" features. The true anti-Bolsheviks are the leaders of the Soviet Union, the Comintern, and the KPD who have betrayed true Leninist-Bolshevik principles and are thus traitors to the proletariat.[61] In a Reichstag speech against the German-Russian treaty, Korsch evoked Luxemburg's warning against the "most terrible and uncanny specter" imaginable: "a treaty of the Bolsheviks with the Germans," suggesting the Soviet pact with German imperialism was a total sellout of the revolutionary perspective and "paved the way for an August 1914 for the Third International."[62] In another speech in the Reichstag on June 24, 1927, Korsch took up the plight of the persecuted workers' opposition in the Soviet Union and criticized Stalin's "red terror"—justified by Stalinists on the grounds that there was a "united front from Chamberlin to Trotsky" threatening the existence of the Soviet Union—as total "nonsense."[63]

In a detailed and penetrating examination of "Ten Years of Class Struggle in the Soviet Union," Korsch turned his historical materialist method to the Soviet

59. Weber, *op.cit.*, p. 151.

60. Korsch argued that: "I am convinced that the present leadership of the KPD is leading the party to the right and is following a line that is increasingly opportunistic and that is an uncommunist and unleninist politics. It is at the same time a suppression through a regime of ideological terror and police methods of all the remains of party democracy that were present up to now, to the degree that the struggle for the resurrection of a communist politics within the party is almost no longer possible at all." Cited in Weber, *op.cit.*, p. 153.

61. This analysis was developed in *Kommunistische Politik*, II:2, p. 18. Discussed in Bahne, *op.cit.*, p. 375.

62. Karl Korsch, *Politische Texte, op.cit.*, pp. 119-120.

63. *Kommunistische Politik* II:11-12 (June 30, 1927).

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Union. He never undialectically rejected the Russian revolution. Rather, his focus was on the class struggles that he saw going on in the Soviet Union from the beginning and which took, after Lenin's death, the form of a struggle between opportunistic, counterrevolutionary forces (represented by Stalin and his various allies) and genuine, proletarian revolutionary forces (represented at different times by the workers' opposition, Zinoviev, and Trotsky). He saw the triumph of the "bourgeois counterrevolution" in Russia as part of a world-wide resurrection of bourgeois power and the capitalist economy after its near collapse in World War I. Although at times the class struggles seemed to signal the triumph of socialist revolution on a world scale, the high tide of revolution (1917-1920) receded, and starting around 1921 the forces of counterrevolution began their world-wide offensive on the basis of a *"changing of the economic situation itself and the power relationships conditioned by it."* With the restoration of capitalism in Europe and return to power of the bourgeoisie *"there was a wide-ranging transformation in the fundamental conditions under which all the international proletariat, as well as the Russian proletariat, had to fight their struggles in the newly beginning period."* Hence, the defeat of the Russian proletariat was part of a series of defeats suffered by the proletariat on a world scale. Further, the counterrevolution in Russia was part of a counterrevolution on an international scale which on the basis of a relatively stabilized capitalism had reinforced bourgeois domination. The task was now to gather from defeat the remaining revolutionary forces "to win new powers for future struggles so as to transform the current defeat into a final victory."[64]

6. *The Rejection of Leninism*

Korsch's critique of the Soviet Union—up to this point—was carried out from a Leninist perspective. His identification with Leninism was not based on belief in the unshakeable "truth" of the Leninist theory but rather arose from solidarity with the Leninist forces: those workers and groups who in the name of Leninism carried out actual revolutionary struggles. His identification with Leninism was rooted in the belief that the Leninist revolution in the Soviet Union represented the reality of revolution in the world at the time. His critique of Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary, opportunistic tendency was carried out from the standpoint of a Leninism rooted in the left-oppositionalist forces to Stalin in the Soviet Union and in the world communist movement. It was only after the definitive defeat of Leninist forces in the Soviet Union and Europe that Leninism was no longer a historical reality. Hence Korsch began to question Leninism itself. He concluded that Leninism had become an ideology utilized for counterrevolutionary purposes (by the Stalinists) and that therefore the time had come to "cut the umbilical cord to Leninism."

Korsch began the process of liberating himself from Leninism in a remarkable essay, "The Second Party,"[65] his most detailed analysis of the crisis

64. *Politische Texte*, pp. 181ff.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-219.

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in the Soviet Union and its relevance for the world revolutionary movement. He begins by noting an open split in the Communist Party in the Soviet Union (December 2-19, 1927) between Stalin and the left opposition (Trotsky, Zinoviev, the Sapronow group, etc.). Korsch carefully examines the programs of the varoius Soviet opposition groups ("the second party") and indicates how their demands that the working class receive better conditions, higher wages, more education and training, more meaningful work, etc., might seem merely "reformist." But, according to Korsch, "what appears in its abstract content as inadequate and 'reformist' demands of the oppositional workers program loses immediately its seemingly reformist character as soon as one considers it just a little Marxistically; that is, historically, concretely, and in the context of the real struggles of the Russian working class." In the context of the struggle against Stalinism and the degeneration of socialism in the Soviet Union, demands of the left opposition are genuinely revolutionary because "the objective content of the demands which they raise must break through in the end the dominating party and state ideology." Here, for the first time since the early 1920s, Korsch juxtaposes revolutionary workers' struggles to a non-revolutionary state and party ideology, thus beginning to question the Leninist theory of the party and state. He argues that the opposition has *"the function of representing the real class interest of the Russian proletariat against the Soviet state ruled by the communist party."* But is this "second party" wants to solve the immense problems it faces, it must "break the umbilical cord which chains its leaders—even the clearest and most consequential among them—until this day to the 'Leninist' ideology of the past." Korsch is now for the first time the anti-Leninist of the Korsch legend. Leninism is rejected as an ideology of the past, a chain and fetter on the working class movement, an umbilical cord that must be snapped to move forward into a new era of revolutionary struggle. Leninism has degenerated into a "Leninist ideology" full of "illusions" and "deceptive images." Thus, as Korsch put it in his 1930 reflections in *Marxism and Philosophy*, "the 'Leninist' theory is not theoretically capable of answering the *practical needs of the international class struggle in the present period.*"[66]

Korsch further argues that both the Stalinists and the oppositionalists who stress the proletarian character of the October revolution are creating a "socialist legend."[67] After Lenin's death, Leninism degenerated further into a

66. *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, p. 130.

67. Korsch would come back to this theme in a later essay, "The Marxist Ideology in Russia," in *Living Marxism* 4:2 (March, 1938), where he argued that Marxism-Leninism served as an ideology that hastened capitalist development and industrialization in Russia: "Within a few weeks those who had opposed the socialistic idealization of the first years and who at the first announcement of the NEP of 1921 had still quite soberly declared this 'new economic policy of a workers' and peasants' State' to be a necessary step backward from the further going attempts of War Communism, discovered the socialistic nature of State capitalism and a cooperatively tinged yet essentially bourgeois economy. Thus, it was not the Leninist epigone Stalin but the orthodox Marxist Lenin who, at that historical turning-point of the revolutionary development when the hitherto undecided practical tendencies of the Russian Revolution were 'seriously and for a long time' directed to the restoration of a non-socialistic economy, at the same time added what he then deemed to be an indispensable ideological supplement to that final restriction of its practical aims. It was the orthodox Marxist Lenin who in opposition to all his earlier declarations first set up the

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"legitimating tool" of the Stalinist leadership that functions to occlude the real situation in the Soviet Union and to enslave the working class. This being the case, the demand to "restore the pure teaching of Lenin" (against Stalin's and Bukharin's falsification) "is a completely useless and in its results a reactionary effort."[68] Hence Korsch urges the Soviet opposition—and all other oppositionalists—to carry out "an *immediate and total break* with Leninism which, whatever its character in the past, has today in its content and function become a seemingly classless but in reality *bourgeois and anti-proletarian state ideology.*"

Korsch concludes "The Second Party" with the plea that the working class should no longer wage their struggles within the communist party but should develop a truly communist politics outside the party: "Our task consists in destroying that dead 'communism' that lives on as a depressing and often idiotic specter in today's proletarian workers movement; sending it to its death and carrying on with doubled energy today's *contemporary and real struggles of the working class* that are already beginning with perceptible new power." Yet, Korsch cannot really envisage a "second party" and real communist politics in Germany outside of the KPD because of the disarray of the left opposition. The best he can do is to call upon "the Russian class-conscious proletariat and the entire class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat of the entire world to be summoned today anew to the old, powerful Marxist solution: 'PROLETARIAT OF THE WORLD UNITE'."[69]

Korsch's tragedy is the tragedy of the European working class movement which had suffered a string of defeats since its hopeful advances in 1917-1921. "The Second Party" is the last dying gasp of the German left opposition before the nightmare of fascism. The specter of communism that had haunted Europe would be replaced by the reality of fascism. Those of the left opposition who did not die in Stalin's death camps would find their "refuge" in Hitler's concentration camps.

7. *The Demise of Korsch's Revolutionary Historicism*

Reflections on Korsch's abortive Leninism should reveal the limits of his revolutionary historicism that grounds revolutionary theory in what one takes

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new Marxist myth of the inherently socialist character of the Soviet State and of the thereby basically guaranteed possibility of a complete realization of socialist society in an isolated Soviet Russia. This degeneration of the Marxian doctrine to a mere ideological justification of what in its actual tendency is a capitalist state and thus, inevitably, a State based on the suppression of the progressive revolutionary movement of the proletarian class, closes the first phase of the history of the Marxist ideology in Russia."

68. Thus, in "Die zweiter Partei," *Politische Texte,* pp. 213-214, he writes: "The 'Leninist' ideology of the still existing 'revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat' and the always 'stormily' progressing 'construction of socialism in Soviet Russia' has long become a legend and at the same time has become a consciously utilized means of holding back the workers not only in their conscious struggles for their independent class goals that have not been satisfied by the bourgeois transformation, but also in their struggle for their most immediate life-interests. For these reasons a break with this 'Leninist' ideology, which has developed at last into a fetter on the proletarian class struggle is an immediate and pressing necessity."

69. *Politische Texte,* p. 194.

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to be the actual revolutionary reality. During periods of intense revolutionary struggle it appears that a theory like Leninism represents the reality of revolution. In this context it appears that the theory is an expression of the actual historical movement: the theoretical consciousness of the struggles themselves. But although there appears to be a unity between revolutionary theory and practice in times of revolutionary struggles, what happens to the theory when a period of revolutionary upsurge grinds to a halt, or is defeated by a counterrevolutionary thrust? Moreover, if theory is merely the expression of revolutionary struggle, from what standpoint could one critique Stalinism or fascism in a counterrevolutionary era when the forces of revolution are temporarily defeated and dormant? Korsch's too hasty identification of Leninism and the Soviet Union with revolutionary reality raises the question, from what standpoint can one identify a struggle, a class, a situation, a country as revolutionary? Surely one's theory of revolution helps to determine what is really revolutionary and what sort of practice one should thus defend or attack, participate in or struggle against. Assuming that Marxism, or Leninism, is "revolutionary" in and for itself and that whatever events coincide with the revolutionary pattern of the theory—or evoke the theory as their revolutionary legitimation—are in fact *the* revolution and anything not fitting with the theory is not revolutionary—this identification of Marxism-Leninism with revolutionary reality is, as Korsch saw, a species of mysticism that finds its temple (and delegitimation) in Stalin's trials and death camps.

Korsch's historicism was bumping up against its own limits and forced him to question Marxism. The result of his reflections from the late 1920s through the 1940s led to a modification both of this interpretation of Marxism and his own revolutionary historicism. The triumph of the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and ascendency of fascism throughout the world created a crisis of Marxism which Korsch was to analyze in detail. He rejected the monopoly of Marxism on revolutionary reality and sought new revolutionary theories and struggles that might lead to a new era of revolution, that might anticipate new possibilities for the abolition of capitalism and liberation of the working class.[70]

To strengthen his theoretical apparatus, Korsch devoted new efforts to metatheoretical inquiries that would fortify the scientificity and autonomy of revolutionary theory. Rusconi, Negt, and others have called attention to a tension in Korsch's writings between the radical historicism that identifies revolutionary theory and reality and an emphasis on the scientificity, objectivity and truth of the theory itself.[71] The Korsch we have discussed repressed this tension and collapsed theory into a reflex of history, an expression of the practice of the Soviet Union and the KPD, or the left oppositionalist struggles against Stalinism. Korsch ignored the problem of

70. See especially "The Crisis of Marxism," *New German Critique, op.cit.*, and "Ten Theses on Marxism Today," in this issue of *Telos*.

71. See Oskar Negt's article in this issue of *Telos* and Gian Enrico Rusconi, "Dialektik in pragmatischer Anwendung," *Ueber Karl Korsch, op.cit.*

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what made a revolutionary theory scientific and focused on its political-revolutionary components. But around 1928 Korsch began to devote more attention to theory itself and returned to a study of dialectics, Marx, Hegel, empirical science, and historical investigations to strengthen his theoretical arsenal and to rethink the problematics of revolutionary theory and practice. Henceforth, there was a tension between theory and practice, between revolutionary theory and historical reality, resulting in a reciprocal process of critique of the theory from the standpoint of current historical reality and practice, and a critique of historical events and situations from the standpoint of theory.

Contrary to some views, however, Korsch never abandoned completely his revolutionary historicism or Marxism. He continued to ground his theory in real historical events and struggles and continuously searched for new forces and possibilities of revolution on the historical stage. Korsch's theory was to remain historical and revolutionary to its core and required constant reflection on and interpretation of the contemporary historical movement, focusing on the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution. History and revolution are the very marrow and substance of Korsch's theory and after he was no longer a historical actor he found himself the secretary to the movement of world history.

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Korsch's Marxism*

by Leonardo Ceppa

Lukács, Korsch, Bloch, and Horkheimer—perhaps the foremost exponents of German Marxist philosophy between the two World Wars—have had rather different political and intellectual biographies. Nonetheless, there is a common theoretical point of reference which enables them to be more than just occasionally opposed to certain tendencies of Soviet Leninist orthodoxy: the specific way in which they were able to recover the Hegelian dialectic and hence the socio-political dimensions of classic German idealism. Contemporary positivism has dismissed the problem of "foundation," with which Kantian transcendental subjectivity meant to answer Hume's empirical subjectivity, thereby opening up a process of reflection on the formal constitution of scientific data. Now, as never before, the problem of the repoliticization of advanced capitalist societies—in particular, the proletarianized middle strata —seems to require a theory of socialization capable of coordinating the collective processes of psychological and ideological formation with the critique of political economy.

Thus, it was not accidental that Korsch was rediscovered in Europe in 1968 as one of those authors most aware of the materialist and epistemological problems related to social praxis. The problem of constitution, i.e., understanding and transforming the world along the historical dimensions of the social division of labor, was the live wire running through all of his theoretical work. He implicitly indicated the complex relations linking the juridical and political meaning of the term constitution with its epistemological meaning. In his 1922 work on *Labor Legislation for Factory Councils* (*Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte*), he drew an analogy between the political constitutionalism of the bourgeois revolution and the industrial constitutionalism of the proletarian revolution. More generally, Korsch systematically demonstrated how the dismissal of the problem of constitution represents the ideological foundation of the various forms of non-dialectical thought: scientistic positivism, political reformism, and the Leninist theory of "reflection."

Today, however, it is necessary to begin to deal with the limitations of the Korschian concept of constitution.[1] Korsch's theoretical limitations originate in a failure to understand the various levels of real abstraction brought together by the Marxian analysis in the systematic concept of capital. In Korsch, total social practice constituting the practical and cognitive forms of objectivity loses sight of the institutional, juridical, bureaucratic, historical and psychological mediations of an empirical reality constitutively conditioned by the reification

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1. One of the most important contributions along these lines is the essay by Oskar Negt published in this issue of *Telos*. Buckmiller's objections, in his "Bemerkungen zu Oskar Negts Korsch-Kritik," *Politikon* 39, pp. 3-8, do not affect Negt's correct way of posing the problem.

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of the commodity form. The premature reduction of the complexity of social practice at the level of the *class struggle*, results in a separation of the empirical *objectivism* of social science from the spontaneous *subjectivism* of revolutionary action. Thus, the dialectical relation between theory and practice is lost once again.

1. Marxism and Classical German Philosophy

The basic arguments of Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* aimed at recovering the original, dialectical dimensions of Marxist theory, by reasserting Marxism as the global science of society from the perspective of the proletariat. In so doing, Korsch took up the issue of the relation between Marxism and classical German philosophy which in his view was neither one of reciprocal exclusion nor of identity but rather, a practical-dialectical relation of supercession. Just as bourgeois philosophy (from Kant to Hegel) had been the theoretical expression of the early bourgeois revolution, so Marxism was the theoretical perspective of the proletarian movement.

For Korsch there were no doubts that Marxism was a science and not a philosophy. But, it was a science epistemologically founded on social practice; i.e., a science which maintained those totalizing dimensions of classical philosophy which prompted Hegel to define each philosophy as "its own epoch comprehended in thought."[2] Thus, Korsch rejected all "neutral" conceptions of bourgeois sociological objectivity, i.e., all positivist conceptions of society as a natural object. Korsch's first thesis, therefore, was that there is no social science apart from a pragmatic, totalizing horizon. To study society is to reflect on man's own forms of objectification.

Korsch's second point had to do with the parallelism between Marxism and philosophy on the one hand, and that of Marxism and the State on the other.[3] Marxism was the economic science of society and not the juridical-political science of the state. Nonetheless, for Korsch, critical Marxian economics did not abstractly eliminate the political dimension of the state and of law, thereby falling into an anarcho-syndicalist economism. Rather, the abolition of the state would be the political result of the overturning of the relation between state and society. Marxism was not an abstract negation of philosophy and politics but rather, the *realization of philosophy* (the critical dismantling of bourgeois ideological forms) and *political revolution* (the supersession of bourgeois state law). Both processes were the theoretical reflection of proletarian social revolution.

Social totality as the objectification of social practice meant two things for Korsch. First, society could be grasped in a total perspective only from the viewpoint of *proletarian class interests*. Second, the resulting scientific representation was not a *Weltanschauung* but its historical and objective reconstruction. Korsch did not hesitate to describe the "truth claim" of

2. Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (London, 1970), p. 40.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 48.,

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Marxian social science in Hegelian terms: "the structure of the whole presented in its pure essence."[4] The Hegelian renaissance promoted by Korsch and Lukács in the early 1920s was a theoretical restatement of the unity of the historical subject and of the social object. The classical epistemological problematic—the grounding of the knowable objectivity of the world on the transcendent forms of subjectivity—was rediscovered in the authentic epistemological dimensions of the Marxian dialecticization of political economy. The scientific knowledge that the "collective worker" has of the social whole *is part* of that whole: reason is not just the substantive instrument of analysis, but objective reality, immanent to ontological structures. In this sense, theoretical categories are existential self-determinations of reality, "abstract one-sided relations of the whole," while predictability does not concern only consciousness, thought, or theory, but also man's mode of production and concrete existence. Nevertheless, the object "remains as before, independent and external to the mind" for, unlike Hegel, Marx did not locate the world in philosophy, but philosophy in the world.[5]

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance and novelty of these positions in the theoretical spectrum of the post-World War I period. Within the context of Marxist thought, they were counterposed to Kautskyian orthodoxy, academic socialism, and in various neo-Kantian currents (Max Adler, Karl Vorländer) which reified the socio-historical dimensions of subjectivity by reducing them to the transcendental schemes of private bourgeois moralism. Within bourgeois sociological thought they were counterposed to Max Weber's relativistic pragmatism and to the various currents which were to be brought together by Karl Mannheim's *Wissensoziologie*. Against the static character of the neo-Kantian transcendent structures, Korsch and Lukács emphasized the historical and pragmatic dimensions of constitutive subjectivity. Against the cultural relativism of bourgeois pragmatism, on the other hand, they reaffirmed Marxian social science's claim to theoretical validity. The historical genesis of truth did not lead them to skepticism, but to the open dimensions of a human absolute realized in the relative and created in history.

For Korsch, forms of knowledge and social structures were not autonomous and separable realities. The concept's ontological and objective import—as a real abstraction or a symbolic mediation of the world—is met by the interpretation of external reality not as a chaotic multiplicity of empirical data, but as the structural objectification of total social practice. In *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte* Korsch showed how the analysis of the juridical and structural transformations of the organization of work allowed one to dialectically trace back the *objective* transformations of modern industrial society first to the bourgeois class' process of becoming conscious [*presa di coscienza*] and then, to that of the proletariat. Labor's struggle for the democratic constitution of

4. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

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work, i.e., for the political self-management of the productive forces, had its historical precedent in the bourgeois struggle for the political constitution of the state which aimed at overthrowing the absolutism of the monarchy. The juridical constitution of bourgeois society consisted in the overcoming of feudal ties and in the conquest of freedom of trade. According to Korsch, the constitution of future industrial democracy would have to consist of a more radical process of liberation which would extend the autonomy sanctioned in the sphere of trade and circulation to the underlying sphere of production.[6] Thus, in *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte* we find the first conception of Marxism as a totalizing "viewpoint" whereby the working class demystifies the ideology of the "free" work contract, and calls into question the "constitution of work" as such.

The conception of the dialectic in *Marxism and Philosophy*, however, exhibited certain theoretical uncertainties which were subsequently destined to have profound repercussions on Korsch's thought. His reorientation of Marxism to the horizon of social praxis occasionally takes on the form of a *self-historicization* or *deduction of theoretical forms* from the specific circumstances of the class dynamic. Later, we shall consider the equivocations which arose out of this restriction of total social praxis to the conscious and organized dimensions of the class struggle. Here it need only be pointed out that his interpretation of the relation of consciousness to reality in terms of "coincidence"[7] rather than of identity or non-identity, seems to contradict the anti-idealist dimensions of the Marxian dialectic. If philosophy is immanent to the world, while the world is *not exhausted* by philosophy,[8] it is difficult to continue to see the relationship of reality to consciousness in the simplistic terms of coincidence or reflection. In Marx, the representation of social objectivity as the objectification of social practice does not exhaust the tension between the concept and the thing. Nor do the objective dimensions of the concept and its ideal priority with respect to the empirical (the "date of knowledge") contradict the real priority of the "datum" over its theoretical reconstruction. Instead, Korsch's self-historicization of Marxism appears to fall back on an equivocal conception of consciousness as a "reflection" of real external processes. In this context, Korsch prefers the young Marx as the theoretician of the 1848 European revolution, over the Marx of *Capital* whose analytical features are "separated out" and they lose their "umbilical cord."[9] For Korsch, Marxism as a theory of revolution does not derive its truth value from its representation of total social practice—i.e., from the totality of the proletariat's practical and epistemological interests within capitalist reification, but from the contingent turns of the organized class struggle. The theory's historical verification is reduced to the immediacy of contingent practical success. Thus, in non-revolutionary periods, Marxism seems to automatically flatten out and become

6. Cf. Karl Korsch, *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte* (Frankfurt, 1968).
7. Korscsh, *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, p. 78.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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simplified; in other words, it necessarily becomes corrupted in an ideological sense (in a positivist or idealist fashion). The circle is clear: on the one hand, the Marxism of the Second International loses its original dialectical dimensions, since it theoretically reflects a phase of ebb or revolutionary stagnation. On the other hand, the revolutionary reawakening of society seems to result from the recognition of the ideological degeneration of the theory, and from the restoration of an authentically dialectical relation between theory and social praxis. In 1923, Korsch still appeared to see Lenin's theoretical work as part of that restoration, defining it as a "bitter criticism of the abasement of Marxism by opportunism."[10] But already in the second edition of *Marxism and Philosophy* (1930) Korsch proposed to deduce the nondialectical character of Leninism from the "failure" of the council self-government in post-revolutionary Russia.

2. *Lenin, Kautsky and the Development of Syndicalist Theory*

Toward the end of the 1920s, Korsch developed his critique of Kautsky in depth, and at the same time began his critique of Lenin.[11] Having left the German Communist Party in 1926 in the closing years of the Weimar Republic, Korsch tried unsuccessfully to stem the sectarian tendencies of "ultraleft" groups and organize them on the basis of a common political platform. In these groups the rejection of the Stalinist line was joined with an implacable critique of the "betrayals" of German social-democracy, accused of having become a supporting party for capitalism and international fascism.[12] In Korsch's argument against Kautsky and Lenin, neither the social-democracy of the Second International, nor Soviet Leninism were viewed as authentic forms of Marxism. Rather, they were regarded as ideological expressions of a still immature class movement. If social-democratic politics remained expressly within the framework of the *bourgeois state*, Bolshevik politics assumed the repressive form of a *party dictatorship* over the masses.

Korsch accused Kautsky of viewing Marxism as a "purely scientific" (non-

10. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

11. Korsch's *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung. Ein Aiseinandersetzung mit Karl Kautsky*, henceforth cited as *Anti-Kautsky*, is from 1929. "The Present State of the Problem of Marxism and Philosophy" (in *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, pp. 87-126), henceforth cited as "Anti-Critique," is from 1930.

12. This was the thesis of social fascism put forth by the Communist Party: "without winning against Social Democracy, we cannot defeat fascism." This kind of politically suicidal extremism could only be partly explained by the historical origins of the German Communist Party, born of the social-democratic "betrayal" of 1914 and the repression of the social uprisings of 1918-1919. The image of Social Democracy as the party of order and as class enemy seemed to find its confirmation in the burning memory of Rosa Luxemburg's assassination on Noske's orders. The thesis of social fascism was corrected by the Third International in 1935 and replaced by a policy of democratic alliances and anti-fascist popular fronts. Cf. Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Il Partito Comunista Tedesco (KPD) nel Periodo della Republica di Weimar* (Milan, 1970), p. 292. Cf. also Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt, 1969), especially Chapter III: "Die Ausschaltung der Linken und Ultralinken: 1925-1927;" and Arthur Rosenberg, *Geschichte der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt, 1970).

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proletarian) social doctrine, and of favoring the bourgeois state as an institutional form above classes and therefore susceptible to take on a progressive, socialist connotation. For Korsch, therefore, the *theoretical* inability to grasp the problem of epistemological constitution on the basis of social praxis was related to the practical and political inability to historicize—and thus revolutionize—the bourgeois capitalist state. The first of these points is developed in those pages of *Anti-Kautsky* in which Korsch reproached Kautsky for having a non-dialectical, i.e., a naturalist and positivist, conception of the social and natural sciences. The Marxian concept of growth had been characterized by the inclusion of an "active side" (*tätige Seite*) in the very forms of objectivity examined. Although avoiding the Hegelian idealist postulate of identity, Marx assumed as the mark of dialectical thought the ability to consider the *object* as *objectification*. The Hegelian program of *The Phenomenology*, of assuming "substance as subject," was transformed in the Marxian program into mediation, or the epistemological and materialist constitution of the empirical datum. Thus, the concrete totality could then be grasped in terms of collective praxis, i.e., as the "product of industry and of social conditions." Against Kautskian positivism, Korsch showed how the natural sciences themselves could be understood as a moment in the growth of the material forces of production. Only in the bourgeois mode of production do they seem destined to be "incorporated" by capital, and therefore to find a repressive technological application against the labor force.[13] The fundamental characteristic of the Kautskian concept of development is instead its positivist elimination of the "active side," i.e., the exclusion of the subjective dimension which constitutes the concrete totality. On the theoretical level, this results in the reduction of the dialectic to a simple, genetic description of the forms of objectivity; not to mention, at the practical level, the exhaustion of revolutionary practice in a contemplative consideration of social becoming as a form of natural evolution. In a nutshell, instead of being the epistemological foundation of the transformation and thus of the scientific consciousness of the world, social praxis becomes a moment which can be extrapolated from a broader cosmological development.

According to Korsch, the positivistic aspects of Kautskian evolutionary materialism find their counterpart in the *idealist* aspects: the reformist overemphasis of the bourgeois political state. The absolute incomprehension of the Marxian concept of "civil society"—which is the link connecting production and cooperation, socio-economic structure and juridical-political superstructure—is at the source of the Kautskian division between a materialist view of Nature and an idealist conception of society and history. Korsch points out the translation of the Darwinist doctrine in a peaceful and evolutionary sense, the mysterious attribution to man of the "spiritual capacity" to create and manage tools and, above all, the conception of civil progress as a passage from a state of natural violence to one of political order, as the fundamental aspects of

13. *Anti-Kautsky, op.cit.*

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Kautsky's "idealist" soul. To assume the legal state as the ethical norm of coexistence is to invert the real relation between the socio-economic and political spheres, thus falling back on a philosophy of progress typical of Rousseau, Kant, or Hegel.

The fundamental thesis of *Marxism and Philosophy* concerned the relation of "supersession" between the Marxian dialectic and bourgeois philosophy. Even in the Marxist camp, Hilferding's and Kautsky's "flat and simplified" concepts had transformed the Marxian science of totality and revolution into a "value-free science." The non-dialectical scientism of these authors ended up by making the proletarian use of Marxian economics altogether extrinsic, thus splitting along Kantian lines the theoretical, neutral and objective Marxism from the socialism of moralistic and reformist intentions. Theoretical positivism and practical idealism are always two faces of the same coin. Only from a dialectical perspective, defined as the unity of consciousness and reality, was it possible, according to Korsch, to assume Marxism as the theoretical expression of the proletarian revolution—the "other side" of the real class movement.[14]

Korsch used the same type of argument without any substantial modification in his polemic against Lenin and the Marxism of the Third International. If bourgeois forms of consciousness are unable to grasp the historical and transient dimension of the *state*, and more generally, of the natural and social world constituted on the basis of social praxis and the division of labor, Leninism is similarly unable to perceive the guarantee of the revolutionary character of the labor movement in its real socio-economic class content. Instead, it explicitly sees it only in the leadership of this struggle, the revolutionary *party*, enlightened by correct Marxist theory.[15] The latter is not dialectically deduced from the class dynamic, but is applied from without, in a Jacobin and pedagogical manner. The argument in the "Anti-Kritik" was to

14. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, pp. 42, 62.

15. Karl Korsch, "The Passing of Marxian Orthodoxy," *International Council Correspondence* III:11—12 (December, 1937), p. 11. The historicization of Leninism and its immediate grafting onto the social-democratic tradition is the subject of two articles which appeared in 1932 in the journal *Der Gegner* (The Adversary), subsequently republished in America under the title "The Passing of Marxian Orthodoxy" and "The Marxist Ideology in Russia." The first article seeks to demonstrate the historical ambiguity of the famous polemic between Bernstein and Luxemburg, and between Lenin and Kautsky. According to Korsch, Bernstein's revisionism openly professed what the majority of his "orthodox" opponents had been practicing daily for some time. With the same severity, Korsch equated Lenin and Kautsky: both privilege the political over the economic dimension. The second article seeks to show the ideological and bourgeois character of the reception of Marxism in pre-revolutionary, feudal Russia. From the very beginning, Marxism in Russia represented the ideological expression of the struggles of the bourgeoisie and the pro-Western intelligentsia to overcome tsarist corporativism, and to establish a modern exchange economy. According to Korsch, this division between the ideological self-understanding of Marxism and the historical reality to which it was applied is at the source of the subsequent Bolshevik transformation of Marxism from a *scientific theory* of anti-capitalist revolution into an *ideological myth* of the party. Even before Stalin, Lenin theoretically sanctioned the neo-populist conception of the impossibility of a normal and organic development of Russian capitalism, and exploited Marxism to justify state capitalist accumulation and the related formation of an exploited working class.

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find its corollary in 1938 in Korsch's equation of the regimes of Stalin and Hitler.[16]

In a favorable review of Anton Pannekoek's book, *Lenin as a Philosopher*, in 1938 Korsch basically repeats the same objections to Lenin which he had made in the "Anti-Kritik:" that the materialism of the Soviet revolutionary takes on the form of a reiteration of vulgar, pre-Kantian mechanistic realism.[17]

By destroying the dialectical relation between being and consciousness, and subordinating the revolutionary movement to the application of pre-established laws of growth, Lenin revealed the secret functionality connecting the "theory of reflection" to the Jacobinism of his political practice.[18] Korsch reproaches Lenin's Machiavellianism in presenting the late historical result of a commercial bourgeois revolution against feudalism as a proletarian movement.[19]

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16. Karl Korsch, "Marxism and the Present Task of the Proletarian Class Struggle," *Living Marxism* IV:4 (August, 1938), p. 119.

17. Karl Korsch, "Lenin's Philosophy," *Living Marxism* IV:5 (November, 1938), pp. 138ff.

18. Actually, Pannekoek's and Korsch's critiques of the theory of reflection seem to be too conditioned by the political motives of their polemic to succeed in objectively grasping the historical meaning of *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*. Against Korsch, Richard Albrecht, in his "Die Kritik von Korsch und Pannekoek an Lenin *Materialismus und Empiriokritizismus*" (in *Das Argument* XIV:74 [September, 1972], pp. 586-625) has emphasized the materialist and dialectical meaning of Leninist epistemology, especially in its anti-idealist aspects. Yet, Albrecht is too 'orthodox' to recognize the moment of truth in Korsch's argument, i.e., his intuition of the apologetic use of the doctrine of reflection in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death. On this point, Oskar Negt had already persuasively shown how the theory of reflection (along with the "dialectic of nature") plays a fundamental ideological role in Soviet society, i.e., the self-limitation of thought to knowledge of processes of technological and scientific objectifications. As the science of practical legitimation, Soviet Marxism had to remove the politically explosive problem of the historical constitution of reified forms of objectivity. Cf. Oskar Negt, "Marxismo come Scienza di Legittimazione: Sulla Genesi della Filosofia Stalinista," in his *Marx e la Rivoluzione* (Milan, 1972). On the limitations of Korsch's anti-Leninism, see S. Timpanaro, "Karl Korsch e la Filosofia di Lenin," *Belfagor* XXVIII:1 (January, 1963).

19. It is interesting how precisely the "pragmatism" of Lenin's conception, which in Korsch indicates the inauthentic dialectical nature of his thought, appeared to Lukács as the fundamental feature of its Marxian authenticity. Korsch judged Lenin's Marxism "ideological" on the basis of the *theoretical distance* between Marxist principles of liberation, proclaimed by the Bolshevik party, and the reality of the dictatorship and exploitation established in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, from a Marxist viewpoint, Lukács had considered as correct the political measures taken by Lenin (state capitalism, concessions to the peasants, new economic policies, etc.) on the basis of the *practical possibility* of safeguarding the new revolutionary regime. The theoretical foundation of Lenin's politics had been identified by Lukács in his *Lenin: A Study of the Unity of his Thought* (London, 1970) in the principle of dealing with political problems according to the concrete situation, i.e., in order to keep on its feet, at any price, the domination of the proletariat, in a universe of declared and secret enemies, and of uncertain allies. In Lukács and Korsch the very same Marxist theory plays opposite roles. The same theoretical principles which, according to Korsch, lead to a falsification of reality, prompt Lukács to justify compromise. The objective possibility of revolution is judged "idealistically" by Korsch when compared to empirical reality. On the contrary, it is understood by Lukács on the level of "abstract reality" and used to "theoretically" justify compromise: "The proletariat cannot initiate and carry out the revolution in conditions which it itself chooses." Already, in *History and Class Consciousness,* Lukács had asserted that the empirical and psychological dimensions of individual or collective representations, hopes, and desires cannot be reduced to the ideal type of political consciousness (or objective possibility). In a similar way, in his pamphlet on *Extremism* (1920), where he discussed the tactical legitimacy of participating in parliamentary battles, Lenin had already warned not to

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The fundamental feature of Korsch's thought which unites his theoretical problematic with his political leftism, is his emphasis on the Marxian concept of "civil society" in relation to the political superstructure of the state or the party. Korsch articulates his interpretation of the concept of revolution as the *overturning* of the capitalist relation between state and society by drawing an "analogy" between the social-democrats' reformist-parliamentary perspective, and the party dictatorship in Russia involved in realizing state capitalism. The first puts forth a line of economic demands which has completely lost sight of the political objective of the overthrow of the system. Consequently, social reforms are not seen as instruments meant to forcibly liquidate the relation between capital and labor, but rather, as objectives which by themselves (i.e., within the bourgeois state), lead to the realization of socialism. In Korsch's view, the Leninist-Stalinist dictatorship, on the other hand, presents itself as "left-wing opportunism." In fact, it puts forth an oppressive form of state capitalism as socialism by using Marxism merely as an ideological legitimation of bureaucratic power.

Within this perspective, between 1928 and 1931 Korsch deals with the political problem of the *trade-union movement* in the Weimar Republic, and that of the interpretation of the *failure of the council movement* from 1871 to 1918. What emerges is the paradoxical and anomalous nature of any trade-union movement which operates in a capitalist society. Thus, it is forced to continuously *explode* the very framework of bourgeois law on the basis of class vindication, while at the same time guaranteeing a *legal* recognition of the space gradually conquered. Furthermore, he locates the historical reasons which led a long process of revolutionary struggle to failure, thereby associating the Paris Commune with the October Revolution.[20]

Returning to the themes of his earlier book, *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte*, Korsch seeks to identify a significant tendency of late capitalist development: the corporativization (fascist and Bolshevik) of the working masses. The recognition of the principle of trade-union association, conquered by workers

approach practical movement problems on the basis of historical and universal theoretical criteria. From very close political positions, around 1920 Lukács and Korsch were to live out almost model political and biographical parables, increasingly moving farther apart. Beginning from a sober evaluation of the prospects for international revolution, Lukács was to tactically adhere to Stalinism, especially to the anti-fascist popular front strategy. Korsch, instead, radicalized his political opposition to the point of considering Nazism and Stalinism as simply different phenomenal forms of the same imperialist structure. This was a theoretical position which, even within the domain of the left-opposition to Stalin's regime, ended up by appearing too undifferentiated. In a letter to Korsch dated October 28, 1926, Amadeo Bordiga made the following observation: "One cannot simply say that Russia is a country in which capitalism is expanding. The situation is much more complex: it is a matter of new forms of class struggle which have no historical precedent... It would seem that you exclude the possibility of a Russian Communist Party politics which would not be the same as a restoration of capitalism. This would be equivalent to giving Stalin a justification or to put forth the inadmissible policy of 'resigning from power'." Cf. "Brief von Amadeo Bordiga an Karl Korsch," *Ueber Karl Korsch*, edited by Claudio Pozzoli (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 243-247.

20. The first set of problems is confronted by Korsch in an important work on labor law entitled "Um die Tariffähigkeit" (On the Right to Bargain), the second in two studies published in the journal *Die Aktion*, both entitled "Revolutionäre Kommune" (The Revolutionary Commune).

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through a long process of social struggle, is overturned in the state capitalist attempt to "legally" manage this right. The transformation of the *freedom* of anti-capitalist association into the *obligation* of legal unionization of the working masses amounts to the corporate manipulation of the class dynamic for monopolistic development. The organizational autonomy of the workers is emasculated and reversed in the legal definition of the work force as a simple "factor of production." For Korsch, fascist Italy and Bolshevik Russia are the two typical models of the realization of this late capitalist tendency.[21] In fact, in Bolshevik Russia, the right of union bargaining is limited to associations which are officially registered with the central council of the Bolshevik trade-union league. Contractual agreements stipulated by these associations are universally binding. Thus, in Korsch's opinion, the revolutionary means of liberation, the Bolshevik state organization of workers, translates into "a greater enslavement of workers through the pure and simple suppression of freedom of association."[22]

Korsch then develops a full analysis of trade-union tendencies in the Weimar Republic, where the bourgeoisie was trying to bring about a fascist sort of "social peace," by means of a coercive legislation of worker associationism. In this sense, the struggle for the right to bargain was among the most significant phenomena and seemed to have plunged into confusion the trade-union theorists of the right to bargain. Korsch's objective is two-fold. On the one hand, on the legal level, he wants to reject the arguments of the labor courts for denying the designation of "trade-union" (and the related rights to bargain) to organizations of the radical left which sought to oppose the three major reformist unions. On the other hand, he wants to inform the socialdemocratic unions of the political meaning (the corporative "traps") hidden in the legal recognition offered by the courts. The concession of the exclusive right to bargain to the three official reformist unions (social-democratic, Christian, and Hirsch-Dunker) actually sought to re-establish the "social peace" of 1914, i.e., the institutional control of social conflicts which even the risings of November 1918 had not permanently crushed.

The results of Korsch's analysis transcend the historical circumstances in which they were formulated. He ends up by bringing out the basic contradiction of the legal doctrine of union rights. The same legal practice which assumes the *autonomy* of the union in question as a formal condition of the legal recognition of the right to bargain—therefore, its ability to carry on a real and not fictitious struggle—then limits this recognition to those unions which do not go beyond making *economic* demands, i.e., do not push the struggle to the point of calling into question the entire *political* and institutional framework. With the reproach of the social-democratic unions for not realizing the "subversive" aspect of the right to strike, Korsch gets to the heart of the union

21. It would be superfluous at this point to emphasize how Korsch, in apparent agreement with bourgeois anti-communists, always prefers to talk about "Russia" than about the "Soviet Union."

22. Karl Korsch, *Um die Tariffähigkeit. Eine Untersuchung über die heutigen Entwicklungstendenzen des Gewerkschaftsbewegung* (Berlin, 1928), p. 9.

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problem. The expression "right to strike" is literally a contradiction in terms: the legal, subversive, economic and political aspects are, in Korsch's view, heterogeneous components of the strike itself. As a simple means of economic bargaining, to sell *labor-power* at the most advantageous price, the strike is part of the capitalist institutional framework based on exchange. As an instrument for gaining political consciousness by the *working class*, which brings into question its entire relation to capital (i.e., the objective conditions of production), the strike cannot be legally integrated into the bourgeois system.[23]

The very Marxian principle so often cited by Korsch, according to which every economic struggle, pushed to the limit, reveals its political nature, thus affecting the whole institutional framework and property relations, leads us once again to the fundamental historical and dialectical constitution of civil society. On the basis of its very contradictions, the latter is destined to overturn the political forms of its alienation, i.e., the ideological legal sphere and the ethical state, which are only its celestial images.

In his two essays on the "Revolutionäre Kommune," Korsch deals with the problem of the historical failure of the council movement in the post-World War I European revolutions. Lenin, Luxemburg, Bela Kun, Gramsci, and others were all attracted to the principle of anti-parliamentary sovietism and therefore to the Paris Commune of 1871. Why had they failed? Korsch answers by pointing out the misunderstandings in their concept of the council. They saw the "commune" as the anti-bourgeois form of government *par excellence*. In reality, however, it historically represented the most traditional political form of the bourgeois, anti-feudal revolution from the free communes of the Middle Ages up to the French Revolution. As a *political form*, the commune can be both a bourgeois government and a party dictatorship. Only if it is specified on the level of *economic* contents can it assume the form of genuine class dictatorship. But it would then be an error, according to Korsch, to mistake a revolutionary dictatorship for communism. The first is necessarily centralist, while the second presupposes complete self-management of the productive forces. Here Korsch begins his critique of Marx's Jacobinism. The confusion of political and socio-economic aspects of the communard regime is, in fact, traceable to Marx himself, who seemed to have exalted the Paris Commune more on the basis of inessential political characteristics (the substitution of the army by a popular militia, revocability of functionaries, etc.) than in terms of its socio-economic content of productive self-management. This is the beginning of Korsch's critical revision of Marxian theory.

23. As Xenia Rajewski put it in her *Arbeitskampfrecht in der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt, 1970), p. 14: "In all capitalist societies, the right to strike has always been an object of discussion: it is not an absolute part of the fundamental rights of the liberal state of law. Only because of the labor movement was it introduced into the bourgeois state. Its elimination, its recognition, its particular historical interpretations, seem to correspond to the relationship obtaining among the social forces in conflict. In fascist dictatorships, its normal elimination is the symptom of the open repression of the working class. However, in bourgeois democracies, too, the continuous variations in its legal interpretation is a mirror of tendencies in socio-economic development."

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Korsch came to the United States in 1936, after having spent some time with other political exiles in England and Denmark. His critical piece "On the New Program of the 'American Workers Party'," had already appeared in 1935 in *Council Correspondence*. There he argues that parliamentary activity is to be accepted as an inevitable compromise which can be superceded only with the growth of the revolutionary struggle. On the other hand, a concrete and simultaneous development of *union* and *political* struggles can lead to a discovery of the true dialectical identity of the two and, therefore, to a recomposition of the abstract and unilateral political perspectives of Leninism and economistic syndicalism.[24] In "Economics and Politics in Revolutionary Spain" and "Collectivization in Spain,"[25] Korsch tries to locate the specific difference between the Bolshevik Revolution and the revolutionary process begun in Spain in 1931. What attracts Korsch's attention the most is the particular union organization of the workers in Catalonia and Valencia: a declaredly anti-party and anti-centralist organization based entirely on the free action of the working masses. Korsch finds in the energy of the anti-statist attitude of the revolutionary Spanish proletariat the positive element which distinguishes the Spanish from the Bolshevik Revolution. In reality, the Spanish revolution was only a premonition of World War II. Korsch, however, hoped to the very last that, as with World War I, the second one would set in motion a series of international revolutionary processes. These hopes too, however, were destined to be dashed.

3. The Principle of Historical Specification and the Revision of Marxism

In a 1946 article entitled "A Non-dogmatic Approach to Marxism,"[26] Korsch recalls his last years in Germany before the advent of Nazism, and the theoretical efforts to reach a clear understanding of the on-going political crisis in discussions with Bertolt Brecht and other comrades. Around 1931, Korsch began a painful process of revision of Marxism which in a sense expresses his political isolation and the failure of his revolutionary ideals. Beginning with the defeat of the 1918 German revolution, with the capitalist restructuring following the 1929 crisis, the fascistization of the middle classes and the workers, the growth of Keynesian political economics and, later, the Stalinist concentration camps, it became ever more evident that certain postulates of Korsch's council communism had become indefensible. Particularly problematic was the basic assumption that objective economic contradictions of monopolistic concentration would automatically force the working class to organize the revolution. Evidently, there was no subjective and political recomposition of the working class corresponding to the political recomposition of capital, of which Fascism was a sign.

If, for Korsch, Marxism is the dialectical *self-overturning* of civil society in

24. Cf. *Council Correspondence* 4 (1935), p. 24.
25. Both in *Living Marxism* IV:3 (May, 1938), and IV:6 (April, 1939).
26. In *Politics* 3:5 (May, 1946), pp. 151-153.

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relation to its political structures, the contradiction he encountered can be formulated as follows: how can Marxism conceptually reflect a revolution which has not *yet* taken place? In the situation of ebb and stagnation such as 1930 Europe, the growth of Marxism as a theory of revolution became inconceivable for Korsch. Here he faced a surprising alternative: either Marxism has never (or better, has not yet) existed, or it has existed as a reflection of *another* revolution, the capitalist and bourgeois version. Korsch tries to escape this skeptical situation by developing both aspects. On the one hand, Marxism as the science of the bourgeois social dynamic will exist in its full form only "after the revolution," when this society and its forms of consciousness will have been practically superceded. On the other hand, Marx as a "classic" figure of revolutionary thought tends to be reabsorbed by the historical background of his Jacobin origins and to move closer to Hegel, the theoretician *par excellence* of the bourgeois revolution.

In "The Crisis of Marxism" written in 1931[27] Korsch seeks to locate the possible overcoming of the crisis of Marxism "as movement and as a theory." The causes of this crisis are the same as those already mentioned in *Marxism and Philosophy*: from the second half of the 19th century and, more specifically, from the death of Marx and Engels, the "living" growth of Marxism came to a halt, to eventually die out altogether. To de-dogmatize and reactivate Marxism by discovering the critical and pragmatic element cannot be the task of a private study and analysis but, rather, must be the "reflex" of a real reawakening of the revolutionary movement.

If, instead of this re-awakening, capitalism enters a phase of political stabilization, Marxism is tendentially falsified and becomes relegated in the background with the philosophical "classics." Historically conditioned by the growth of bourgeois revolutions in the early 19th century, Marxian theory seems to be able to refer only by intuition or metaphor to the future proletarian revolution. Both Marx and Lenin initially criticized Hegelian idealism but, "in a spirit of delusion and partial failure," ultimately they were forced to reaccept the very same philosophical idealism which had reflected the bourgeois revolution of the past. In the 1931 theses on *Hegel und die Revolution* Korsch claims that the Marxian and Leninist dialectic "has only the character of a transition." What Marx and Lenin realized "is a theory of proletarian revolution, not as it has developed on its own basis but, to the contrary, as it emerges from the bourgeois revolution, therefore still marked in every aspect, in content as in method, by Jacobin characteristics, i.e., by the theory of the bourgeois revolution."[28]

This is further elaborated in the 1938 article "Marxism and the Present Task of the Proletarian Class Struggle," where Korsch contrasts Marx as the "theoretician of the proletariat" to Marx the "radical-bourgeois journalist." The first provides the theoretical foundation for the revolutionary science of

27. Now in *New German Critique* 3 (Fall 1974), pp. 7-11.
28. In *Politikon* 38 (1971), p. 10.

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the working class. The second, instead, seems to ideologically mediate the struggles of the German bourgeoisie (in the columns of the *Neue Rhenische Zeitung*) with those of the Parisian proletariat, or to propagandize (in the *New York Tribune*) for a politics of democratic alliances against Tsarist despotism. Korsch imputes this dualism to the Jacobin model of revolution which Marx adopted before 1848 and never explicitly renounced. Rather, Marx's opposition to Proudhonism and to Bakunin's anarchism can be explained precisely on the basis of his original privileging of the *party*, the *state* and the *political moment of the class struggle*: "Thus Marx, from the first to the last, defined his concept of class in ultimately political terms, and in fact though not in words, subordinated the multiple activities exerted by the masses in their daily class struggle to the activities exerted on their behalf by their political leaders."[29]

These and similar criticisms seem to have been completely put aside in *Karl Marx* (1938), which is Korsch's masterpiece. Actually, they were expressed indirectly, by means of the principle of historical specification, which is one of the book's theoretical cornerstones. Two particularly significant points are relevant here to sum up the development of Korsch's thought and show its theoretical limitations: the problem of the epistemological constitution of the natural and social sciences, and the principle of historical specification as the main methodological canon. Here, the confusion between the *abstract-real* level of the logical and cognitive moment, and the *empirical* level of genetic determination—i.e., the neglected distinction between the synthetic and dialectic moment of "exposition" (*Darstellungsweise*) and the analytical moment of empirical research (*Forschungsweise*)—leads to the overturning of the *dialectical* problematic of historical "constitution" in the *positivist* problematic of empirical "specification," thus resulting—through Kurt Lewin—in a paradoxical alliance between Hegel and Wittgenstein.

What connects Marx with the great themes of classical German philosophy is the notion of the dialectic as the epistemological constitution of the social and natural sciences. According to Korsch, here is where the Hegelian critique of the abstract understanding and the Marxian critique of the commodity form come together. For both Hegel and Marx, the individual (or his understanding) no longer appears—as in Smith and Ricardo—as the "natural point of departure" of all social life. Rather, the starting point becomes a social nexus or objective form of relation (objective spirit, the commodity form) which conditions the individual beyond his conscious intentions. The *thinking ego* is no longer the ontologization of the Lutheran individual consciousness, but the concrete identity of universal and individual, i.e., that dialectical process of socialization through which subjects "form" and "recognize themselves" *through* labor and symbolic-linguistic interaction. In other words, the economic structure and social form of production are no longer as the

29. Karl Korsch, "Marxism and the Present Task of the Proletarian Class Struggle," *op.cit.*, p. 118.

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Enlightment would have them the *external* limitations to private initiative, but become elements objectively constituting human subjective faculties. Korsch proceeds to brilliantly demonstrate how, at this point, any analogy between the system of the Hegelian Spirit and that of Marxian capital, comes to a halt. What for Hegel is the positive fulfillment of absolute Reason, it becomes, for Marx, the world "turned on its head" and reified by capital, i.e., "a deficiency of the present capitalistic regulation of social production."[30] On the basis of materialist epistemological principles, Korsch can define Marxism as a "class science"—an expression incomprehensible for bourgeois empiricism. Thus, Marxism is the science which has the proletarian class as its *subject* (Lukács' "class consciousness") and the bourgeois mode of production as its object. By presupposing the historical constitution of its specific subject and object, Marxian theory can reunite theoretical objectivity with practical and political intentionality: the world or pure reason with that of practical reason. Korsch repeatedly points out how the object of the Marxian critique (the "phantom" objectivity of capital's economic laws) is the form of economic self-alienation destined to disappear in the future with the self-management of the productive forces. Within this perspective, he once again succeeds in demonstrating the inadequacy of *technocratic* conceptions, which interpret the development of the productive forces in terms of a unilinear "rationality with respect to ends." Thus, according to Korsch, the mystifying element of technocratic and positivist ideology is to be found in the displacing of the Marxian contradiction between productive forces and relations of production—where the dialectic of subjectivity translates into the (qualitative and incommensurable) thematic of needs, use value, labor as the "source" of value—by the simplistic representation of a continuous "adjustment between technical results and their social application."[31]

According to Korsch, the historical constitution of the natural and social sciences safeguards the dimension of the totality. What Marx does is translate the objective Hegelian spirit in the systematic totality of the alienated form—the manifestation of the collective worker under the cloak of social capital. At this point, however, his misunderstanding of the specific level of abstraction where such a totality is to be located ends up by "flattening" theory into praxis, and by "restricting" praxis to the class struggle. From this viewpoint Korsch's thought reveals an unsuspected coherence. The principle of historical specification is nothing but a new way of formulating the dialectical identity of theory and practice already proposed in *Marxism and Philosophy*.

To better understand the ambiguities generated by Korsch's definition of the dialectic as the "correspondence" of consciousness and reality, it may be helpful to deal with the fundamental Marxian distinction of three epistemological levels: 1) The substance, or the general concept of capital; 2) Its manifestation, or competition as capital actually exists, and 3) The historical and empirical reality of capitalist society. While, in their dialectic,

30. Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx* (New York, 1963), p. 141.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

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the first two levels constitute the abstract and scientific representation (*Darstellung*) of the general concept of capital, and form the object of Marx's actual investigation, the third level, capital in its historical reality and, therefore, the reconstruction of the various empirical forms of consciousness of civil society, is part of those investigations that Marx himself never managed to carry out. It is the merit of recent interpretative studies (Reichelt, Rosdolsky, Schmidt) to have clarified the internal logical structure of the Marxian economic critique. In the *Grundrisse* and in the first two volumes of *Capital*, Marx deals primarily with the abstract substance of capital as a self-reproducing system. It is pointless to add that the ontological import of the Marxian dialectic, and the rejection of nominalistic empiricism, are expressed in the *objective* nature of the theoretical abstraction which, although not coinciding with empirical reality, is nonetheless *real* and cannot be reduced to a subjective or conventional hypothesis. Instead, in the third volume of *Capital*, the relation between the substance and the mode of expression—between the general concept of capital and competition as capital as it is, or its form of personification—are articulated so as to focus on the concrete figures assumed by capital "at the surfaces of reality," i.e., in competition and in the very consciousness of producing agents."[32] But in both cases a consideration of the historical and empirical reality of capital (conjunctures, cycles, movement of prices, etc.) remains explicitly excluded from the domain of Marxian consideration.[33]

In the context of our discussion of Korsch, the foregoing considerations permit us to realize the practical and theoretical consequences of the Korschian concept of the dialectic as "correspondence of consciousness with reality." From the viewpoint of consciousness, Korsch seems to misunderstand the level of abstraction of the Marxian "real representation" (*wirkliche Darstellung*) of capital as a self-reproducing system. Korsch writes: "The critique of political economy . . . never ceases to be critique of the *whole* of bourgeois society and so of *all* its forms of consciousness."[34] Actually, as already indicated, the Marxian critique settles for much less (thus even in this respect differentiating itself from the Hegelian dialectic). It does not embrace capitalist society in all of its empirical determinations, nor at the historical, empirical, and psychological levels of the relative forms of consciousness but, rather, restricts itself to systematically develop the abstract totality of the concept of capital, deducing from this the necessary forms of "appearance" which find their synthesis in the famous chapter of the "trinitary formula." The principle of Hegelian logic, according to which "the substance most manifest itself" is valid for Marx on the logical and cognitive level, but not on the historical one, i.e., it is valid on the level of the scientific representation of the totality, but not on the level of its empirical and real constitution. From the viewpoint of social reality, Korsch

32. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, Vol. III (Berlin, 1969), p. 33.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 839. On this whole question, see Helmut Reichelt, *Zur logischen Struktur des Kapitalsbegriffs* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 85-87.

34. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

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restricts constitutive praxis—that mode of production which also includes the historical and empirical levels of ideological, psychological, institutional and political alienation—to the reality of the class struggle. This is how he arrives at his inadequate definition of Marxism as the "unified general theory of social revolution,"[35] where it is not only the "science of reappropriation," but also the science of that extraneous subject or "world turned on its head" which is capital, and therefore (from the viewpoint of the critique of ideology), the "phenomenology of the epistemological restrictions, within which the bourgeois subject operates."[36]

The reduction of the total form of production to the reality of the class struggle, allows us to explain two aspects of Korsch's thought which initially seem truly paradoxical: the absence of both a real *critique of ideology*, and of a real *problematic of organization*. As for the first of these points, it will suffice to point out that the polemic against Kautsky and Lenin (for example) is never a real "polemic" but, rather, the rigorous demonstration of the historical necessity of their ideological limitations. This demonstration takes on the form of a "deduction" of their doctrines from the real historical context of the class struggle. The justificational attitude towards the past promptly reverses itself in the spontaneist attitude towards the political tasks of the present. If history as *thought* appears to Korsch the theoretician as the reflex of the real class movement, history as *action* appears to Korsch the politician as the class struggle *always already given* as "the other side" of the capitalist organization of labor. According to this viewpoint labor-power for Korsch always appears in the guise of the revolutionary working class. The class commodified by capital, and reduced (by means of wages) to exchange value, immediately becomes the class as conscious subjectivity, mainspring of capitalist growth, and therefore able to exploding the system. The *economism* that deduces the level of the class struggle from the state of imperialist and monopolistic recomposition, turns into the *idealism* that (by identifying reality with consciousness) sees the *class-in-itself* (socialized by capital) as a *class-for-itself* (as political subject).

These problematic aspects of the Korschian dialectic reappear with all their ambiguities in the principle of historical specification developed in *Karl Marx*. Probably referring to the epistemology developed by Kurt Lewin within psychology, Korsch begins with the fundamental "historicity" of all scientific knowledge. Experimental science does not discover constants but, rather, concrete law-like relations: it neither classifies nor collects phenomena but, rather, establishes their specific genetic and conditional structure. Thus, Korsch overcomes the false alternative between nomothetic and idiographic science, natural and social science, empiricism and historicism. In fact, both sides of the couple have "structured wholes"[37] as their objects. In Korsch's view,

35. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

36. Cf. Helmut Reichelt, "Aufsätze zu einer materialistischen Interpretation der Rechtsphilosophie von Hegel," introduction to Hegel's *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Frankfurt, 1972), p. xl.

37. Korsch, *Karl Marx, op.cit.*, p. 79.

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the principle of historical specification finds its most conscious realization in Marxism which further develops the process of historical relativization of the concept of truth—already initiated by Enlightenment critiques of metaphysical concepts of substance and cause. Here, historical relativization does not mean merely the constitution of theoretical truths in terms of total social practice, but also the specific form of determination of the universal in terms of the historical and analytic investigation of single phenomena. Precisely at this point, we can understand how the Hegelian identity of theory and reality—that concept of totality from which empirical data were deduced—in Korsch, ended up by transforming the concept of the theoretical and formal *constitution* of data into the concept of its genetic *reflection.*

"The social law exists only in the historical development through which a particular form of society proceeds from its particular state in the past to its particular state in the present... Marx's criticism confronts a given fact 'not with the idea, but only with another fact,' and so by the most exact possible study of each fact, represents the facts themselves as 'different moments of development' confronting one another."[38]

Korsch does not realize that Marxian theory starts out from the empirical and genetic reality of historical change, only to quickly move away in the name of that systematic structure of representation which distinguishes the logical from the historical level, the "exposition" of capital as a system from the history of its original accumulation. Authors such as Alfred Schmidt or Lucio Colletti, have brilliantly shown how, in Marxian dialectic analysis, the *formal* priority of the Logical above the Historical, crosses with the real priority of the Historical over the Logical.[39] Thus, what is lost in Korsch is the *transcendental* dimension of Marxism, i.e., what qualifies the critique of political economy as the *scientific specification* of the Kantian and Hegelian reflections on the historical self-constitution of the species. Korschian social analysis is articulated positivistically, i.e., as empirical and structural science absolutely incapable of reflection, because it is reduced to a mere "reflex" of the objective foundation of the class movement. The objective and subjective aspects of the Marxian

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

39. Alfred Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur* (Frankfurt, 1970); and Lucio Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel*, trans. Lawrence Garner (London, 1973), Chapters VI and VIII. On the one hand, Marx understands theory as a derived "construct," while on the other, as a conceptual abstraction more concrete than empirical reality itself. From the first perspective (Kantian and materialist) empirical concreteness precedes the abstract concept. From the second perspective (Hegelian and dialectical) the conceptual abstraction is the premise of all critical comprehension of the empirical. The Marxian dialectic is precisely the union of the *genetic* process from the concrete to the abstract with the *rational* process from the abstract to the concrete. The first concreteness is the immediate, unpenetrated and chaotic empirical dimension; the second concreteness is conceptually comprehended reality (brought to the level of the concept), "unity of multiplicity." Consequently, the cognitive concreteness reached at the end of the analysis is identical and non-identical with the real concretenes preceding the cognitive process. It is precisely this distinction which is missing in Korsch. He tends to pose the empirical and the conceptual levels in a relation of complementarity or analytical and abstract reflection, which would bring the Marxian dialectic closer to "the modern axiomatic method of mathematical empirical science." Cf. Karl Korsch, "Einführung" in *Das Kapital* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 12 and 22.

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critique are not grasped in their articulated relation of mediation but, rather, juxtaposed (idealistically, i.e., positivistically) in a sort of "parallelism" or "reflection." The objective growth of the productive forces, the actual, the practical action of the class struggle, the theoretical development of the "representation" of capitalism, are simplistically coordinated, proceeding from an inadequate concept of the real basis as class struggle.[40] The anti-philosophical and positivistic conception of a Marxism reduced to an "exact science, based on observation and experiment"[41] goes hand in hand with a spontaneistic dismissal of organizational problems and ideological critique: "The materialist theory of the class struggle is itself class struggle."[42]

By identifying the logical with the historical level, and, the cognitive with the genetic moment, does more than just deprive the theory of its "anticipatory content"[43] and of the political practice of its organizational dimension. The principle of historical specification also ends up postulating the *theoretical equivalence* of fatalism and activism, of historical justification and political rebellion. Korsch himself came to this "irrationalist" conclusion in 1942 in his article "Notes on History." Korsch starts off with the Nazi philosophy of history: "The Nazi's have abandoned the ideas of the ascending phase of the capitalist age only to fall for the undynamic, fatalistic, and pessimistic concept of history which in the last pre-totalitarian phase was expressed in Spengler's *Decline of the West*."[44] Hitler's own speeches, Korsch continues, reveal a sort of historical pessimism and fatalism. In this sense, the common element in the various Nazi ideological—from Moeller van den Bruck to Rosenberg, from Juenger to Steding—is in the reification of history into an objective process "suffered and accepted" by men. According to Korsch, there is a strong connection between Hegel's historicism, the positivist aspects of the later Marx and of bourgeois sociology, and the historical fatalism of Spengler and the Nazis. It is the same process of relativization and historization of the bourgeois conception of history. The decline of the civilizing influence of capital deprives history of its dynamic and progressive elements, transforming it into an irrational and fetishized "destiny." There, Dorsch's principle of specification reveals its paradoxical meaning. The absolute relativization of historical knowledge—the reduction of the criteria of value to the immanent dimension of the "lived"—permits Korsch to turn bourgeois historicist fatalism into praxis-oriented revolutionary activism. Just as monopolistic concentration objectively coalesces the working class and brings about the system's downfall, at the structural level, so, at the ideological level, bourgeois philosophy of history—when fully thought out—indicates the point where bourgeois cultural

40. In his essay on "Theory, Empiricism and Class Struggle" (published in this issue of *Telos*), Negt has already shown how conscious class struggle represents *only one* of the forms of constitutive praxis, and "not even the most important" one.
41. Korsch, *Karl Marx, op.cit.*, p. 79.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
43. Cf. Furio Cerutti, "Hegel Lukács and Korsch," in this issue of *Telos*.
44. Cf. *New Essays* IV:2 (Fall 1942), p. 5.

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relativism is transformed into the revolutionary principle of historical *specification*: "This pan-historical view of the present age is not only the end-term of a protracted development of the past. It contains at the same time the basis for an entirely new approach which may be described alternatively as the final rejection of the fetishistic concept of history or as the ultimate historicization of all human activities and of all fields of social research. . . Just as the physical sciences of today become more and more closely related to their practical applications in technology and industry, so theoretical history will ultimately be fused with its practical application to the concrete tasks to be solved by associated individuals within the framework of a given form of society."[45]

Here it is clear that, by positivistically destroying the subject's reflection and functionalistically levelling hermeneutics to technology Korsch's historical specification cannot be a real alternative to the pan-historical view of late capitalist ideology. Rather, it appears as its activist and anarchic otherness. The fetishist conception of history is reversed in the abstract spontaneity of all human activities. But it all seems to coherently follow from the original misunderstanding of the dialectic as "correspondence of consciousness and reality." In the young Wittgenstein, the discovery of the transcendental linguistic viewpoint remains paradoxically tied to a traditional nominalist position which excludes the reflexivity of that very language and determines a projective ontological relation between language and reality. In the same way, in Korsch the epistemological constitution of the sensuous world on the basis of the class struggle leads to the mystical silence of the identification of theory and praxis. The loss of the Marxian dimension of the real abstraction makes the positivistically interpreted immanent growth of capitalist technology automatically and paradoxically realize the practical overturning of bourgeois society and, therefore, the theoretical perfection of its own scientific self-representation.

4. *The Fascist Counter-revolution and the Second World War*

According to Korsch, the crisis of Marxism "as theory and as movement" was most convincingly shown in the inadequacy of the theoretical analysis of, and practical opposition to, the Fascist counterevolution. The analysis of Fascism and of the imperialist war was the *lietmotif* of Korsch's political writings between 1935 and 1943.[46] Even before 1932, Korsch had tried to define the

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

46. These are the years in which he wrote for the journal of the American council communists, entitled, successively, *International Council Correspondence, Living Marxism*, and finally, *New Essays*. The editorial staff assembled by Paul Mattick was composed of workers of all nationalities who were connected with the *International Workers of the World* movement and the group of Dutch council communists whose best known exponents were Canne Maijer and Anton Pannekoek. Otto Rühle, an exile in Prague from 1933-1936, and afterward a collaborator with Trotsky in Mexico, also wrote for the journal. In the U.S., council doctrines and the remnants of the IWW had a certain influence on the unemployed masses during the Great Depression, but reached the level of a real political movement only in certain cities—such as Chicago—before the coming of the

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Fascist concept of the state.[47] By appropriating Marxist and syndicalist criticisms of the productive and institutional structure of early liberal capitalism, Korsch saw the Fascist state as capitalism's attempt to displace its competitive phase with a new and organic form of society. Korsch's thesis was that the state-monopolist concentration of Fascism could not resolve the contradiction between capital and labor but, rather, would intensify it to the breaking point. Along these lines, a series of theses regarding the Coming World Crisis, the Second World War, and the Revolution, were published in *Council Correspondence* in May, 1935. These theses which today appear to have been real prophesies, had been written in jail by Heinz Langerhans, and were published anonymously. Korsch took part in the discussion with an article, "Remarks on the Theses,"[48] in which he tries to clarify the structural relations existing between the economic crisis, world war, and the international revolution. The displacement of early competitive capitalism by capitalist state planning which by becoming the political subject, realizes its broadened reproduction through the war economy, the extension of consumption and corporate manipulation of the unions, offer to the working class the material premises for an immediate political self-recognition. According to Korsch, the state monopolization of economic growth—carried out in different forms in Nazi Germany, Roosevelt's America, and the Stalinist dictatorship—far from monopolizing the class struggle and "pacifying" society, would have directly provoked the political recomposition of the working class within a brief period of time.

The facts belie this thesis and Korsch finds fimself forced to further elaborate his analysis. The articles written after 1940 reflect the dramatic nature of international developments. "The Fascist Counter-Revolution" begins from a stupefying realization that the world revolution of which Marx spoke , has changed colors: France's destiny shows that the defeat of a nation does not mean the development of the Communist Revolution, but of Fascist counter-revolution. No matter who wins the war, Korsch has no doubts as to the final result: "a further gigantic step toward the fascistisation of Europe, if not of the whole European, American, Asiatic world of tomorrow."[49] In this context, the Korschian revision of Marxism proceeded further: Marx's classic

New Deal. All copies of these journals have now been reprinted, with an "Introduction" by Paul Mattick, in 6 volumes (Westport, Conn., 1970). On the Dutch council communists, see Gottfried Mergner, ed., *Gruppe Internationale Kommunisten Hollands* (Hamburg, 1971); on the historical origins of *Linkskommunismus*, cf. Hans Manfred Bock, *Syndikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969); Pierre Broué, *Révolution en Allemagne 1917-1923* (Paris, 1971); and Fritz Kool, ed., *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft. Dokumente der Weltrevolution* (Olten-Freiburg, 1970). On the unemployed movement before the New Deal and on the class struggle in the U.S., see Irving Bernstein, *A History of the American Workers* (Boston, 1970).

47. "Thesen zur Kritik des faschistischen Staatsbegriff," *Der Gegner* 4-5 (1932), pp. 20ff.

48. In *Council Correspondence* 8 (May, 1935), pp. 13-22. For Korsch's relation with Heinz Langerhaus, see Michael Buckmiller and Jörg Kammler, "Revolution und Konterrevolution: Ein Diskussion mit Heinz Langerhaus," in *Ueber Karl Korsch, op.cit.*, pp. 267-291.

49. Karl Korsch, "The Fascist Counter-Revolution," *Living Marxism* V:2 (Fall 1940), p. 29.

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theory is "unable to deal with the new problems that arise in the course of a not merely occasional and temporary but deep-rooted, comprehensive, and enduring counter-revolutionary development."[50] From the bourgeois democratic perspective of an epoch still characterized by the "civilizing" aspects of industrial growth, Marx saw in counter-revolution only an abnormal, regressive, and temporary moment in the course of history. According to Korsch, however, with the appearance of Nazism and Fascism we are faced with a profoundly new and reactionary form of capitalist reproduction which subordinates the growth of the productive forces to systematically destructive ends. The war economy, the planning of destruction, and counter-revolution thus become "normal" features of social growth.

For Korsch, Nazi Germany provides typical model of imperialist growth. In "Prelude to Hitler. The Internal Politics of Germany: 1918-1933,"[51] — an essay dealing with the internal political crisis of the Weimar Republic — he argues that the so-called "German republic," which tied imperial Wilhelmian Germany to the national-socialist regime, was in reality a "republic without republicans:" a tormented period of institutional crises leading to Nazism. The so-called "German revolution" of November, 1918, was actually neither a proletarian revolution against the bourgeoisie, not a bourgeois revolution against the Junker regime. It was, paradoxically, a "revolution without revolutionaries." What fully unfolded on the socio-historical level was Hitler's nationalsocialist counter-revolution, which was able to bring "order" back and decisively deal with a series of concrete economic problems which other political forces had allowed to deteriorate. To conclude, in Korsch's opinion, the Weimar Republic was a period of incubation for social counter-revolution, with Nazism destined to expand beyond Germany's borders all over Europe. In a second article entitled "A Historical View of Geopolitics,"[52] he considers the "science of imperialist domination" developed in Germany by General Karl Haushofer. Traditional political geography limited itself to analyzing the inevitable geographical logistic, and spatial conditionings on the functions of the political state. Nazi geopolitics, on the other hand, reverses the academic historicist and orientation with an agressive principle of political organization, turned towards the future. It considers territorial structures from the viewpoint of imperialist exploitation, presenting itself as the military and political science of the strategic control of space. All new pan-European and pan-Asiatic conceptions, etc., are indebted to it. Classical imperialism was based on control of sea space; the contemporary imperialism of the Nazi generals avails itself of new logistical means of communication, which allow a much more efficient control of internal continental areas. In this respect, Korsch sees geopolitics as

50. *Ibid.*, p. 31. On the historical relativization of the Marxian dialectic, see Karl Korsch, "The Old Hegelian Dialectic and the New Materialistic Science," *International Council Correspondence* III:9-10 (October, 1937).

61. In *Living Marxism* V:2 (Fall 1940), pp. 7-14.

52. In *New Essays* VI:3 (Spring 1943), pp. 8-17. Cf. also Karl Korsch, "The Structure and Practice of Totalitarianism," *New Essays* VI:2 (Fall 1942), pp. 43-49.

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the most mature form of international imperialist ideology.

American monopolistic capitalism itself reveals the same structure as the Nazi totalitarianism against which it is fighting. In "The Workers' Fight Against Fascism,"[53] by relying on the economic analyses of Berle and Means, Korsch shows how the word "democracy" in the United States is reduced to a simple label masking the reality of a very powerful oligarchic administration. But, according to Korsch, there is really no difference between the radio advertising of American corporations, interspersed with "music, war, baseball, and domestic news," and the "suave voice of Mr. Goebbels, who recomments armaments, race-purity, and worship of the Fuehrer."[54] Notwithstanding all this, Korsch continues to believe in an automatic reversal of Fascist mobilization of production into the revolutionary mobilization of the working class. As with the First World War, this second inter-imperialist war should also turn into a class encounter, bringing along a series of revolutionary results on an international scale. Faced with Stalin's Machiavellian realism, which had not hesitated to make a diplomatic pact with Hitler in August 1939, Korsch exasperates his political messianism. He sees Fascist and Nazi victories in the theological metaphor of the triumphant Antichrist proceeding the last coming of Christ, and generating confusion among the faithful because of his similarities with the Redeemer. Korsch reiterates that the economy of Fascist and Stalinist states does not represent socialism, even if there is a surface "resemblance," but, rather, is the last desperate attempt of capitalism to avoid its destiny.[55] If proletarian revolution has not yet begun, this is because the war in progress has not yet become sufficiently "total" to coincide with the system's self-destruction: "it is the great secret of the present war—a secret as carefully guarded by the fascist agressors as by the democratic defenders—that a totally unrestricted war would result in a gigantic increase of the social and political power wielded by the workers in uniform and thus by the working class in general."[56]

But Roosevelt's America is not Tsarist Russia. Far from being the catalyst of revolution, the war seems to produce precisely the opposite psycho-social effect. In 1941, Korsch dedicates an important essay to the problem of the historical relation between war and social transformation, entitled "War and Revolution." It seeks to embrace the entire political history of the bourgeois revolution. In a long *excursus* on Machiavelli and the wars of the Italian Renaissance, the religious wars, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, Korsch finds confirmation for his basic thesis: the growth of capitalism, and the social affirmation of the bourgeois class on the ruins of feudalism, reveal an essential "unity of war and revolution." The very concept of "total war" was born with the mass insurrection of August 1793. But even

53. *Living Marxism* VI:3 (Winter 1941), pp. 36-49.
54. Korsch, "The Fascist Counter-Revolution," *op.cit.*, p. 35.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
56. Korsch, "Prelude to Hitler," *op.cit.*, p. 41.

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then, in the space of a few years, the national and revolutionary war was transformed into imperialist expansionism. In a scheme destined to repeat itself, the radical spirit of Jacobinism gave way to the Girondist profiteering spirit. From then on, and in ever more evident manner in the course of the 19th century, the original tie between war and revolution—characterizing the period of the revolutionary rise of the bourgeoisie—was destined to turn into its opposite. From an instrument of bourgeois independence, war becomes "counter-revolution," i.e. the instrument of imperialist plunder. Korsch emphasizes how 19th and 20th century imperialist wars far from expressing the positive role of emancipation of the wars in the past, represent only the destructive and counter-revolutionary form of reproduction of a system lacking any historical legitimacy. Korsch's political position towards to war in progress is two-fold: both activist and abstentionist. On the one hand, he sees revolution as always spreading in the very processes of capitalist restructuring. On the other hand, his detachment increases towards an inter-imperialist war in which neither of the two sides has the slightest in common with the interests of the working class. According to Korsch, in this world conflict the working class is neither the protagonist nor the participant. Rather, it seems to have paradoxically become the spectator. "The struggle for the new order of society does not take place on the battlefields of the capitalist war. The decisive action of the workers begins where capitalist war ends."[57]

The political thesis, shared by Korsch and the whole editorial staff of the journal, according to which Stalinism and Nazism are equivalent forms of state capitalism, must be seen in this perspective. Thus, they rejected all strategies of democratic, anti-Fascist alliance since it would have meant fighting imperialism, not on its own ground, but on the basis of an already superseded historical perspective.[58] The exploitation of the working class in the Soviet union gives rise to a simplistic equation of the various conflicting regimes, while an abstract definition of proletarian class interests seems to justify a rejection of any policy of alliances: "Just as the 'national socialism' of Herr Hitler and the 'corporative state' of Mussolini vie with the 'Marxism' of Stalin in an attempt to invade, by the use of a pseudo-socialist ideology, the very brains and souls of their workers as well as their physical and social existence, so does the 'democratic' regime of a People's Front government presided by the 'Marxist' Leon Blum . . . differ from the present-day soviet state not in substance, but only by a less efficient exploitation of the Marxist ideology."[59]

Here the principle of historical specification so often invoked by Korsch, does

57. Karl Korsch, "War and Revolution," *Living Marxism* VI:1 (Fall 1941), p. 14.

58. Karl Korsch, "The Fight for Britain, the Fight for Democracy and the War Aims of the Working Class," *Living Marxism* V:4 (Spring 1941), pp. 1-6. The concept of state capitalism was to be subsequently articulated by Paul Mattick in relation to the Keynesian theory of mixed economy, in his book *Marx and Keynes* (Boston, 1969).

59. Karl Korsch, "The Marxist Ideology in Russia," *op.cit.*, p. 50. Korsch sees the Comintern policy in the 1930s as an insane repression of spontaneous class movements in Western Europe, and as the instauration of an enormous secret para-military organization. Cf. his review of Jan Valtin's *Out of the Night*, entitled "Revolution for What?" *Living Marxism* V:4 (Spring 1941), pp. 21-29.

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not lead to specify theoretically the most advantageous compromises to be made on the political level, but to falsify and abstractly flatten out this reality in the name of a mythological concept of revolution. On the one hand, the proletariat as a class plays no role in the inter-imperialist structure of the conflict since it is not a real subject of political power. On the other hand, it need not ally itself with the democratic anti-Fascist strata of the bourgeoisie, since it *contains* the perspective for the total overthrow of the system. The question which Korsch and Otto Rühle posed to the working class and to themselves on the occasion of the international broadening of the conflict: "*which side to take*?"[60] no longer expresses any strategic choices, but only the abstract freedom of those who have lost contact with the real movement.

Little is available of Korsch's work in the post-war period: only a few documents, notes, letters and incomplete typewritten manuscripts. But from what has been published, few doubts remain as to Korsch's total rejection of the Marxian perspective. The first of the "Ten Theses on Marxism," written in 1950 claims that, "It is by now completely senseless to ask oneself to what an extent the doctrine of Marx and Engels is theoretically relevant and practically applicable today." Rather, according to Korsch, it is necessary to proceed from the realization that "the first step to take, in order to put revolutionary theory and practice back on its feet, is to have done with Marxism."[61] The brilliant theoretician of the German council movement and the "Ultraleftist" opposition in the Reimar Republic, after having desperately privileged for so many years the truth of "his" Marxism with respect to the international political situation, now ends by rejecting Marxism in the name of reality. For him, Marx becomes one of the many prophets of the proletarian revolution which has not yet taken place. His doctrine is not the least different from those, equally mistaken, of the other social and political thinkers of the 19th century. If only with the *practical* realization of revolution will it be possible to shape its *theory*, if all forms of theoretical analysis must be subordinated to the practical overthrow, it is not surprising that the abandonment of a Marxist perspective for Korsch coincides with a halting of this theoretical work, and a kind of mystical silence before an unpenetrated reality.

Yet, this is only one side of the matter: to overemphasize it would be to fall into the intellectual myopia of those who made revolution depend on the preformulated correctness of theory. The subtle relation between theory and praxis can be compromised from both sides: by the anarchic rebellion of those who sacrifice theory to praxis, as well as by the theoretical universalism of those who lose sight of the "active side" of the materialist intuition of the world. To be faithful to Korsch's *intentions*, would be to return to the original meaning of the dialectic, i.e., to the relation between universal and particular, identical and non-identical, which interlaces our private fortunes with those of a social context which we express, and which expresses us. Korsch's personal

60. This is the title of an article by Otto Rühle in *Living Marxism* V:2 (Fall 1940), pp. 14-18.
61. Published in this issue of *Telos*.

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biography, closed in 1961 in Belmont, Massachussets, after a long period in a clinic for nervous disorders, does not merely show that there are no purely individual or exclusively theoretical solutions to the social problems in which we are caught. It also shows that as long as communism must pass through the compromises of dictatorship and violence, it will be forced to participate in the very injustices against which it struggles. Faced with a Marxism reduced to a "science of legitimation"—an apology for a political universal which obtains over the heads of its subjects—any form of anarchic individualism will preserve its moment of truth. Seen in this way, Korsch's sacrifice of the theoretical cloak of Marxism, but not of its ideals of emancipation, may yet signify the *faith in a cause* which neither October, 1917, nor November, 1918, succeeded in attaining. That cause—the council self-management of the productive forces, and the overturning of the relation between state and society—continues to represent the "objective possibility" of our epoch (its horizon of historical intelligibility), as well as to guage the abyss of our lack of freedom. Faced with the biased mystifications of the Left's *Realpolitik* (reformist historicism, ethical and political providentialism, triumph of the party) Korsch's "ultra-Leftist" spontaneism will always find fertile ground in the spirit of the young.

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Theory, Empiricism and Class Struggle: On the Problem of Constitution in Karl Korsch[1]

by Oskar Negt

> "...no party in any country can force me into silence when I have decided to speak. But I should still like to argue that you might do better to be somewhat less sensitive, and in your action—less Prussian. You—the socialist party—need socialist science, and the latter cannot live without freedom of movement... A light strain, to say nothing of a rift, between the German party and German socialist science would thus be a misfortune and disgrace without precedent. That the executive committee, and you personally, retain and must retain a significant *moral* influence upon *Neue Zeit* and everything appearing elsewhere is self-understood. But that must suffice for you and it can... And then again you should not forget that the discipline in a great party can by no means be as strict as in a small sect..."[2]

The Relevance of Korsch's Thought

Today, within the framework of the newly posed task of a revolutionary restoration of Marxism, it becomes increasingly urgent to find solutions to problems directly relating to three main areas: the establishment of a materialist social research (without which Marxist theory threatens to lose its empirical substance) which is necessitated by the given experience organized by the division of labor in the particular sciences; the reformulation of the concept of *objective truth* as found in a rudimentary but formally undeveloped form in the Theses on Feuerbach; and, finally, within the context of late capitalism, the specified determination of revolutionary, transforming, and historical praxis as the essence of the dialectic between forces and relations of production (as well as between production and class struggle), which materializes in the structure of the social objects and needs.

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1. The basic ideas of the present essay were presented in an article in the journal *Politikon* (October-November, 1971). Critical objections, especially by Michael Buckmiller in "Bemerkungen zu Oskar Negts Korsch-Kritik," in *Politikon* (January-February, 1972) and by Erich Gerlach have led me to once again work through the available studies by Korsch. This showed that some of the criticisms were justified. [This article appeared in the present form in Claudio Pozzoli, ed., *Ueber Karl Korsch* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 107-137. English translation by Ray Morrow.]

2. From a letter by F. Engels to Bebel, May 1, 1891, in *August Bebels Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Engels* (The Hague, 1965), p. 417.

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Within academic philosophy all of these issues are dealt with under the heading of the problem of "constitution" (*Konstitutionsfrage*) which, along with modern epistemology, traces back to Kant. In late capitalism it has only been taken up in Husserl's phenomenology (limited, however, to the set of problems on the relation between the social *Lebenswelt* and the sciences) and the methodological (F. Kaufmann, etc.) and various related praxis-philosophical approaches (the authors writing in *Praxis*, K. Kosik, etc.). The academic associations which accompany the concept of "constitution" have apparently hindered its penetration into Marxist discussions.

Even Karl Korsch does not explicitly deal with the question of constitution, although it is the basis of his critique of reflection and copy theory. Likewise, it can be argued that, ultimately, all the epistemological difficulties of his theory rest upon this question.

Korsch refers to the problem of constitution in three typical contexts: *revolutionary praxis as socialization; the education of the proletariat as a class; and labor law.* If man, as Marx puts it, "must prove the truth, that is, actuality and power, this-sidedness of his thought in praxis," then this concept of truth is tested only when the proletarian class actively sets about transforming reality. For Korsch this is only possible when there emerges an identity of objective knowledge and practical, humanly-sensual activity immersed in historical perspectives, as found, for example, in socialization. In other words: the truth and this-sidedness of human thought is confirmed only in the praxis of class struggle. The syndicalist forms of struggle have a central meaning in the constitution of the proletariat *as* a class. The process of transformation from the objective class situation to conscious, organized class politics is mediated through these forms of struggle. Where Korsch speaks explicitly of constitution in the sense of total social order, e.g., in his 1922 work on *Industrial Law for Factory Councils* (*Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte*), he has in mind the constitutional-legal concept. To be sure, during the period of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, it is difficult to separate this from the epistemological conception.[3] Korsch traces a parallel development between state constitutionalism and the constitutionalism of industrial democracy determined by the displacement of historical phases. If, in the development of the political community, constitutionalism marks only a transitional phase

3. For example, for Kant, the treatment of the constitution problem is by no means an abstract scholastic philosophical exercise. He clearly perceives the relationship between the foundations of objective truth and social reality. The establishment of the conditions of constitution of objective reality and reality-related thinking, hence the discovery of that "hidden construction" of which Marx speaks, should contribute not only to the order of knowable things, but also to the overcoming of the Hobbesian state of social nature. Precisely in these social categories Kant discusses the function of a critique of pure reason: "That (metaphysics as the full and complete development of human reason), as mere speculation, it serves rather to prevent errors than to extend knowledge, does not detract from its value. On the contrary, this gives it dignity and authority, through that censorship which secures general order and harmony, and indeed the well-being of the scientific commonwealth, preventing those who labor courageously and fruitfully on its behalf from losing sight of the supreme end, the happiness of all mankind." *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York, 1965), p. 665 ("The Architechtonic of Pure Reason").

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between absolute monarchy and full bourgeois democracy, then in the transitional phase to socialism, the "development of the constitution of the community of labor," industrial constitutionalism is the beginning stage of industrial democracy. The constitution of legal reality is no longer *homogeneous* as was still the case in the subjective rights and objective legal institutions of the 19th century which were exclusively formed through private property and bourgeois class domination. Rather, it is broken up into two class-subjects whose struggle is not only reflected in legal consciousness, but in institutions as well. Korsch, however, never again took up these important thoughts nor did he relate them to objective reality as a whole independent of their merely legal framework.

If in the following investigation of Korsch's thought the problematic of constitution is central, that does not imply that it is an abstract philosophical critique. That would be inappropriate for the subject matter. For one can say without exaggeration that, from the problems of state organization to the theory of knowledge and the dialectic, for Korsch there is no theoretical questioning independently of the historical situation or isolated from the actual situation of the real class confrontation. The problem of the reflexive self-application of historical materialism also generates the attempts to periodize Marxist theory, which, according to Korsch, was never entirely in accord with the corresponding praxis of class struggle not only in later developments, but from the very beginning. Thus, to analyze the driving contradictions of Korsch's thought in the context of theory, empiricism and class struggle, a detailed discussion of his substantive interpretation of the historical constellations of the labor movement is required. What, then, is the relevance of Korsch's theory?

In a social climate in which sections of the revolutionary intelligentsia and class conscious, unionized labor especially, have recently gained a political interest in the critical appropriation of Korsch's theory, three factors are decisive:

1. Toward the end of the period of economic reconstruction in the early 1960s, class struggles in Western European countries not only intensified, but also changed their form. To be sure, traditional mass organizations—communist as well as social-democratic and unionist—generally retained the loyalty of the masses represented by them. There have been no notable cleavages or splits. But at the same time, primarily set off by the initiatives of students and youth revolts, radical movements have come into being within these organizations as well as in extra-parliamentary spheres which are still difficult for the party and organizational apparatuses to control. These spontaneous, anti-bureaucratic movements express the masses' new *political* needs and interests which frequently go beyond immediate wage demands. Despite the difference in content, these demands all point in the same direction: *the producers' self-organization and self-administration—a renewed vitalization of the practical experiences and ideas of the working class engaged in struggle which, under specific historical conditions, are always related to the revolutionary commune*

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of 1871, the Soviets, the German council system of 1918, the Spanish communes, the Chinese cultural revolution, etc. That these organizational forms cannot be simply transposed to the current situation does not alter the fact that every step of real proletarian activity in capitalist countries and in the transformed socialist societies, produces organizational forms which owe their validity and effectiveness to their historical circumstances.

2. Clearly, the de-Stalinization which began in the middle 1950s has scarcely helped to create a climate of discussion in which a Marxism, transformed into a science of legitimation by the Stalinist bureaucracy, could be overcome and the revolutionary-dialectical content of Marxian theory restored. The thrust of the rebelling students and youth of the protest movement was directed against this type of Marxism which consisted of a number of ontologically reified laws, meant as control mechanisms rather than guidelines for action. They recognized that they could do nothing with such ready-made laws in their practical work. For that reason they fell back on revolutionary conceptions which had proven effective for entirely different types of social conditions: the imaginative modes of action of the social revolutions of Cuba, Vietnam, and China. Since it quickly became apparent that the failure of the protest movement was ultimately grounded in this a-theoretical behavior, it became necessary to recover the original contents of Marxian theory which had been encrusted by institutional instrumentalization. Most of all, it became necessary to resolve the modest problem of a reconstruction of the critique of political economy without falling into those forms of political dogmatism which play a fatal role from Kautsky to Stalinism. Substantial segments of the revolutionary intelligentsia have concluded from this that only the *liquefaction of political-economic categories and the vitalization of Marxian social theory* can make a practical contribution by productively setting free the revolutionary contents of the dialectic of theory and praxis for the class struggle taking place before our eyes. This is not to be separated from the reappropriation of the theoretical approaches of the more advanced Marxism suppressed and outlawed by the official Communist Party history.

3. Despite differences in organizational praxis, nearly all segments of the West German Left seek to investigate the history of the labor movement from new viewpoints and bring to the attention of proletarian public opinion those currents within the labor movement which were accused of deviation and were gradually forgotten, although in their time they were very important for class confrontations and for the clarification of theoretical positions within Marxism. That the linear history of progress of communist parties, dominated by Soviet interests, is not identical with the history of the revoloutionary labor movement gradually becomes clear, even where excluded and in part physically liquidated oppositional groups have not yet been rehabilitated by individual West European communist parties.

Of course, all three levels are only symptoms of a political climate, and it would be false to de-emphasize the numerous new forms of dogmatism in theory and organization. What is new is that these dogmatic theoretical and

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organizational approaches today face continuous pressures of legitimation—not only from the side of critical and undogmatic Marxism, but mainly through the practical experience of class struggles. The theory of Karl Korsch, which over half a century ago reflected with supreme conceptual energy upon class struggles of the European labor movement, war, collapse, fascism, crises of labor organizations, is of particular relevance today for two main reasons:[4] earlier than most other Marxist theoreticians Korsch recognized the *political* meaning of the relations between epistemological questions of Marxism and the immediate praxis of class conflict. Thus he initiated a phase of philosophical and political interpretation of Marx behind which a Marxist theory formation (which carries the categories of the critique of political economy into the stream of its historical movement) can fall back only when abandoning the materialist knowledge-interest. Since Korsch's program for a restoration of the revolutionary content of Marxist theory cannot be reduced to a more or less abstract philological reconstruction separate from real class struggles, it is not surprising that the contradictions of the real movement, as well as the situation of Korsch's increasing isolation in opposition and as an immigrant, is reflected in the theory itself. Thus, internal logical consistency is not the standard by which to measure Korsch's thought.

On the other hand, Korsch had raised anew the organization question at every stage of development as a substantive problem of workers' self-determination over their work- and life-processes. With unparalleled persistence he held fast to the idea of self-administration, the councils as the basic corporate unit, as "forms of counter-government," and as fundamentally the only legitimate political form of expression of the masses' self-organization and self-education. Korsch maintained this conviction in spite of the Leninist party organizations which moved into the foreground of his political praxis. After the failure of the council system in Germany and Hungary, party organizations became for Korsch the "visible content of the thought corresponding to the class situation."[5] Wherever the councils' organizational form emerges historically—whether in the form of the Paris Commune which was primarily distinguished for Marx by its content as a "laboring corporate body" (*arbeitende Körperschaft*), whether as Soviets, the council organs in Germany, or the anarcho-syndicalist communal constitutions of the Spanish Republic, Korsch analyses them all from the perspective of the expressive richness of mass

4. In an article in the *Sozialistischen Politik* of February 1973 there appears an unusual explanation for the Korsch renaissance. According to the author, Richard Albrecht, it is the interest of commercial capital which has brought Korsch into the market in order to deceive gullible intellectuals—"a typically imperialist manoeuver in the ideological-philosophical domain of class struggle for which the works of Karl Korsch are excellently suited at the moment" (p. 55). This article, by a stupid author who puffs himself up as a Marxist and who can hardly camouflage with militant behavior his ignorance of what he sadly expounds, is completely irrelevant for an understanding of Korsch. It is worth reading on entirely different grounds: it shows how a previously significant socialist journal goes to the dogs when it has given up the spirit of Marxist critique.

5. K. Korsch, "Lenin und die Komintern," *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* (Frankfurt, 1971), p. 137.

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spontaneity, the creative diversity of the forms of emancipation which no centralized organization or cadre party is in a position to construct or plan in advance.[6]

Thus, unlike Lukács, who was much readier to compromise and who was always afraid of losing his internal party audience, Korsch never derived historical, fetishized models valid for all phases of proletarian class struggle from organizational forms of the working class which had arisen and had been preserved in specific, historical situations. Korsch applied to parties, as well as to councils, revolutionary communes and trade unions, the Marxian idea that "at a certain point in its development every historical form was dialectically transformed from a form developing revolutionary productive forces, action and consciousness, into a fetter of the same."[7]

Both levels of argumentation of Korsch's thought have had a great influence on the revolutionary intelligentsia during the past decade, especially in Germany, where the revolutionary intelligentsia did not have first-hand knowledge of the living traditions of the labor movement. That is not accidental. At least since his 1929 "Anti-Kritik," through the permanent conceptual effort to re-establish the revolutionary content of Marxist social theory and through the self-application of historical materialism, Korsch tried to theoretically update the experience of an historical situation which is still relevant for the labor movement today: the degeneration of revolutionary Marxism to a science of legitimation. This degeneration began with the policy of "socialism in one country," was institutionally consolidated with the unfolding of Stalinism, was enforced through the threat of death for deviations, and had as its central epistemological instrument the reflection or copy theory. The disappearance of the revolutionary drive of the European labor movement and the accompanying menacing growth of counter-revolutionary currents had led Korsch to focus on praxis in his critique of *epistemological objectivism* already formulated in *Marxism and Philosophy* (1923) and to reveal the catastrophic practical objectivism contained in the economistic theory of the crash and in the idea of the law-like historical inevitability of socialism. Korsch's undogmatic approach to Marxism did not seek to establish what Marx actually meant. Rather, it attempted to grasp the "critical, pragmatic and activist element," inseparable from Marxist social theory, and to employ it as a weapon in the proletarian class struggle. Thus, the practical question concerning the meaning of theory for class struggle penetrates even subtle epistemological discussions which intensified

6. Bertolt Brecht, who throughout his life had acknowledged Korsch without reservation as the authority in all questions of Marxism, clearly expresses in a letter to Korsch dated January 19, 1941, the central problem of the question of organization as posed for Marxists: "I would expect a lot from an historical investigation of the relation between councils and parties. The specific causes for the failure of the councils, the historical grounds, would be of great interest to me. That is tremendously important for us... Aside from yourself, I would know of no one who could investigate that." Unfortunately, Korsch never systematically investigated this relation of burning actuality today, between councils and political forms of organization.

7. K. Korsch, "Revolutionäre Kommune," *Schriften zur Sozialisierung* (Frankfurt, 1969), p. 94.

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significantly after the threatening failure of Western European approaches to revolution and the expansion of counterrevolutionary movements. "There is no use in discussing controversial points in any social theory...unless such discussion is part of an existing social struggle. There must be several possibilities of action for the party, group or class to which the social theory in question refers."[8]

The Marxian Theory of Revolution and the Essence of the Political

By applying the materialist conception of history to the development of Marxism and in determining the historical relationship between theory and praxis, Korsch found himself entangled in a contradiction towards whose clarification and resolution he devoted a substantial part of his thought. *On the one hand,* Korsch unreservedly accepted the interpretation of theory found in *The Communist Manifesto*, according to which the communists' "theoretical conclusions" "merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."[9] Not accidentally, this is one of the most frequent citations from Marx in Korsch's writings. The reality-content of Marxist theory, its ability to guide political action, is correspondingly grounded in its concrete grasp (i.e., in a general form suitable for "intellectual action" (*geistige Aktion*), of the actual situation and direction of class struggles. *On the other hand,* Korsch discovered throughout the history of Marxism—glaringly illustrated during the Stalinist period, but in principle already in Marx and Engels and especially in Kautsky's orthodoxy—a structural contradiction between the real movement of class conflict and theory. "It is an especially clear example of that striking contradiction which, in one form or other, is noticeable in all phases of the historical development of Marxism. It can be characterized as the contradiction between Marxist ideology on the one hand and the real historical movement always concealed by this ideological disguise on the other hand."[10]

Korsch, however, is not satisfied with criticizing these ideological distortions as mere deviations from an original Marxian theory assumed to be unchangeable and valid. Of course, for him, there are also historical moments when the restoration of revolutionary Marxism has been achieved, as in the case of the active unfolding of the dialectic of theory and praxis in Lenin's *State and Revolution*. There are also exceptions as seen in Bernstein's reversal (in this "most conscientious, honorable and consequential of all unsocialist socialists")[11] when he destroyed social-democratic reformism's ideological veiling of reality by decisively turning away from Marxism. Of course, the revolutionary socialist Korsch, who was familiar with the theory-less pragmatic militancy of the English labor movement, indefatigably fought Bernstein's

8. K. Korsch, "A Non-Dogmatic Approach to Marxism," *Politics* (May, 1946), p. 151.
9. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, trans. S. Moore (New York, 1964), p. 81.
10. K. Korsch, "On the History of Marxist Ideology in Russia," *Living Marxism* 4:2 (March 1938), pp. 44-50.
11. K. Korsch, "Sozialismus und soziale Reform," *Schriften zur Sozialisierung*, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

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position. But at least Bernsteinian revisionism expressed a real historical state of affairs: the primarily state-guided unionist and political praxis of social-democracy. "In this sense, one can actually invert the generally accepted relationship between Kautskyian 'Marxism' and Bernsteinian 'revisionism,' and define Kautsky's *orthodox Marxism* as the theoretical obverse and symmetrical complement of *Bernstein's revisionism*."[12]

The situation to which Korsch reacted was determined by a confusing multiplicity of political positions—orthodoxy, revisionism, centralism, or ultra-leftism—all of which equally referred to Marx and Engels to legitimate their respective praxis. Bernstein himself, in his early essay on the *Presuppositions of Socialism* (*Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*) could not resist the pressure to search for legalistic evidence in Marx and Engels. Under these conditions Korsch sought to establish that authentic form of Marxist theory from which to expect a binding force and practical effectiveness for revolutionary action. First, in 1918 his criticism was directed at one of the most important obstacles to a thorough-going socialist overthrow, Kautsky's orthodoxy, which had discarded all practical questions concerning the transition from capitalism to socialism, and the problem of the revolutionary state. Then, following the failure of the West European revolution, the instrumentalization of communist parties in the interests of the Soviet state after 1925, and his expulsion from the party, he rapidly learned from bitter experience that it was not a matter of a particular problem with the Second International. Rather, there was an "ideological (*weltanschauliche*) solidarity of the entire international Marx orthodoxy"[13] which also included the Stalinist legacy of Lenin.

Korsch had his first political experiences with the English Fabians. Their customary matter-of-fact approach shaped his way of thinking throughout his life. It enters in as *one* moment in Korsch's concept of praxis which can neither be reduced to organizational technique, nor completely separated from pragmatic and syndicalist elements. In this historically determinate and therefore changeable sense, praxis remains the reference point of Korsch's entire thought—in principle even during that phase of his life when he completely cut himself off from active participation in class struggles. Thus, in 1920 Korsch identified socialization, the essence of practical, humanly-sensual activity, and of objective knowledge, with social revolution. He spoke not as a distant, philosophizing theoretician, but as a practical socialist alarmed by the lack of revolutionary imagination, the "nearly incomprehensible backwardness of socialist theory confronted with all the problems of practical realization,"[14] caused by the growth of Kautsky's Marxist orthodoxy and directionless reformism. Thus, those who accuse him of sharing assumptions of identity theory, as the Communist Party has done, deliberately ignore the weight that such statements have for Korsch.

12. K. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (New York, 1970), p. 112.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
14. K. Korsch, "Grundsätzliches über Sozialisierung," *Schriften zur Sozialisierung, op.cit.*, p. 75.

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Korsch steadfastly adhered to the concept of fundamental democratic socialization, clearly demarcating it from the politics of simple state socialization. Similarly, after his activities as a party communist had run aground, it never occurred to him to fetishize the council constitution out of disappointment. On the contrary: he warned against denouncing the departure from these organizational forms as mere subjective treason by individuals. In 1929, he wrote: "Now, after the overcoming of the world economic crisis of the year 1921 and the thereby conditioned defeats of the German, Polish, Italian workers, and the following chain of further proletarian defeats to the English general strike and miner's strike of 1926, European capitalism has begun a new cycle of dictatorship on the back of the suppressed working classes. Under these changed objective conditions, we revolutionary proletarian fighters can nc longer subjectively hold on, completely unexamined and unchanged, to our old beliefs in the revolutionary meaning of the council theory and the revolutionary character of council government as the direct further development of the political form of the proletarian dictatorship 'discovered' by the Paris Communards half a century ago."[15] This confidence in council organizations, broken by the expansion of counter-revolutionary movements, reawakened as the leading labor organizations of Catalonia, the syndicalist CNT and the anarchist FAI, implemented a form of communal production never before tried on such a scale. The Spanish revolution concluded the revolutionary wave following the First World War. Despite its failure, for Korsch there were two legacies of its experiential content. First of all, organizations which ideologically refused to participate in politics, as for example the tradition-rich Spanish syndicalists and anarchists, were forced by the pressure of bitter experiences to recognize in the proletarian class struggle—especially during its revolutionary phase—the permanent connection between economic and political action. Secondly, the Spanish revolution time and again confirmed that the masses in their struggles create an impressive multiplicity of forms for a new type of transition from capitalist to communal modes of economic production.

For Korsch, however, this descriptive analysis of concrete instances of class struggle must not be separated from the effort to simultaneously understand every practical question as a revival and active realization of Marx's social theory along with his materialist conception of history and the critique of political economy. The theoretician of "historical specification," who continually emphasized the need to apply historical materialism to its own development, saw himself faced with the task of going back to the historical origins of Marxism in order to release Marxist theory from the ossified, monolithic block of orthodoxy. He tried to locate those historically developed tendencies which inevitably have worked their way into Marxist social theory, and which constitute its inner structure of tension. For, "in the final analysis, today's crisis is the crisis of Marx's and Engels' theory as well. The ideological and

15. "Revolutionäre Kommune," *op.cit.*, p. 93.

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doctrinaire separation of 'pure theory' from the real historical movement, as well as the further development of theory, is itself an expression of the present crisis."[16]

In the context of the present argument, it is not particularly relevant to trace Korsch's attempt to periodize the history of Marxism. If Korsch speaks of reconstituting the revolutionary content of Marxism, he, like Lenin, understands this not as an objectivistic problem separate from the actual class struggle. Korsch describes Lenin, even after his own expulsion from the party, as the greatest revolutionary politician of the present epoch. In fact, Lenin's *State and Revolution* obviously represented the model of Korsch's own efforts to reconstitute Marxism. The "problem of reconstitution" should therefore be briefly discussed in terms of the following three practical questions which are central for theory formation: *the revolutionary commune, the theory of revolution, and the trade union question.*

On the Paris Commune

If in the *Address to the General Council* on the Civil War in France, Marx describes the Paris Commune of 1871 as a government of the working class, the result of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, and as the "finally discovered political form under which the economic liberation of work can be completed," Korsch objects that the commune is linked to the history of bourgeois emancipation precisely through this *political form*. Thus, through almost a thousand years of development, the commune turned out to be not only a substantially older bourgeois form of government than parliament, but is the purest class-like *appearance* of the struggle of the bourgeois class against the feudal social order up to the culmination of the revolutionary movement of the bourgeoisie in the great French Revolution of 1789-1793. There is evidence that Marx himself was not unaware of this connection. In fact, the *Poverty of Philosophy* of 1847 already contains the remark that the coalitions found in the medieval municipality have, for the constitution of the bourgeois class, a function similar to that of strikes and coalitions for the constitution of the working class. "With respect to the bourgeoisie we have to distinguish two phases: that in which it constituted itself as a class under the regime of feudalism and absolute monarchy, and that in which, already constituted as a class, it overthrew feudalism and monarchy to form a bourgeois society. The first of these phases was the longer and demanded the greater efforts. This too began by partial coalitions against the feudal lords. Much research has been carried out to trace the different historical phases that the bourgeoisie has passed through, from the commune up to its constitution as a class. But when it is a question of making a precise study of strikes, coalitions and other forms in which the proletarians accomplish their constitution as a class right before our eyes, some are seized with real fear and others display a transcendental disdain."[17]

16. K. Korsch, "Crisis of Marxism," *New German Critique* 3 (Fall 1974), p. 6.
17. K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Moscow, 1955), pp. 150-151.

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What Korsch criticizes is not what Marx describes as the great social measure of the Paris Commune: namely, its own working existence. What he tries to point out is the contradiction between the historically adequate assessment of the Commune and the strategic judgment of its meaning for the working class. The *Address to the General Council*, besides being an effort to describe the specific mode of functioning of a "republic of labor," is also a factional polemic against Proudhonists and anarchists, who not only controlled the majority in the Commune, but were also its most imaginative and active supporters. Thus it is not accidental that Marx emphasized the *proletarian class content* of the Commune as a working corporate body and its negating function as the destruction of the bourgeois machinery of the state. At the same time, Marx left the *political form* of the communal constitution undetermined, e.g., whether it should be centralized or federalist. "For the sake of the revolutionary essence of the Paris Commune, [Marx] suppressed the criticism of the particular form of its historical appearance which he should have pursued given his theoretical perspective."[18] Hence, he tries not only to incorporate Marxism into the Commune, but the Commune into Marxism at the same time. If Lenin repeatedly stressed that Marx was a centralist, he was certainly correct. But Marx himself had pointed out the unambiguous federalist tendencies of the communal constitution within the framework of a centralism which did not correspond to the historical form of the Paris Commune.

In his critical revival of Marxism, Korsch was not interested in questioning the epochal validity of Marxian social theory. On the contrary: since he explored the political and social constellations which infiltrated it during the period of its genesis, he wanted to uncover the *historical contents* of those particular conceptions—in this case, the revolutionary commune—which guard against an abstract development of Marxist theory isolated from real class struggles. The sublation of the reifications in the development of Marxist theory begins with the liquefaction of the very teachings of Marx and Engels. The degeneration of Marxian theory into a science of legitimation stems precisely from the way in which its determining contradictory tendencies are harmonized in a global *Weltanschauung*. Detached from their critical-revolutionary contents, these contradictory tendencies can be subordinated to any political interest whatsoever.

On the Concept of Revolution

To the end of his life Korsch held that the Marxian concept of the political is characterized by Jacobin and Blanquist tendencies. The separation of politics and interests, of proletarian self-organization and party, the related over-evaluation of the political, and finally, as an historical example, the self-liquidation of the councils in Russia in favor of a centralized political apparatus of domination so far removed from proletarian interests that even the European counterrevolution could use them—all of this indicates to Korsch

18. "Revolutionäre Kommune," *op.cit.*, p. 104.

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that already in Marx the *theory of revolution is internally split*. "In many respects, the proletarian revolution still carries the birthmarks of the bourgeois revolutionary theory, of Jacobinism and Blanquism."[19]

The kernel of Korsch's critique of the Marxian theory of revolution lies in the over-estimation of the political elements of action stemming from the bourgeois concept of revolution. The bourgeois elements Marx transferred to the proletarian revolutionary theory have "historically and theoretically—only the character of a transition. What is thus created is a theory of proletarian revolution not as it has developed on its own roots, but on the contrary, as it emerges from the bourgeois revolution..." According to Korsch, this Jacobinism in the Marxian theory of revolution is what ultimately leads Marx to develop his theory of classes in *political* terms. As a result, he implicitly subordinates the manifold activities of the masses in their everyday class struggles to those activities exerted by political leaders and the vanguards in the interest of the masses. To support this thesis, Korsch refers to a 1885 letter from Engels to Vera Zasulich. In trying to grasp the political direction of the explosive Russian situation, Engels significantly argues by analogy to the French revolution. Once in Russia "1789 has been launched, then 1793 will not be long in following." He says: "What I know or believe I know about the situation in Russia makes me think that the Russians are approaching their 1789. The revolution *must* break out there within a short period of time; it *may* break out any day. In these circumstances, the country is like a charged mine which only needs a match to be applied to it... This is one of the exceptional cases where it is possible for a handful of people to *make* a revolution, i.e., with one little push to cause a whole system, which...is in more than labile equilibrium, to come crashing down, and thus by an action in itself insignificant to release explosive forces that afterwards become uncontrollable. Well now, if ever Blanquism—the fantastic idea of overturning an entire society by the action of a small conspiracy—had a certain *raison d'être*, that is certainly the case now in Petersburg. Once the spark has been put to the powder, once the forces have been released and national energy has been transformed from potential into kinetic...—the people who laid the spark to the mine will be swept away by the explosion, which will be a thousand times as strong as they themselves and which will seek its vent where it can, as the economic forces and resistances determine."[20] This conception of revolutionary processes, cited in the passage from Engels' letter, appears to be completely and exclusively grounded on the "substitutionalist" behavior of active and resolute minorities. It clearly contradicted the Korschian conception of the mass self-organization. It is questionable, however, whether it characterized the Marxian conception of revolution as a whole. Korsch sought to clarify the previously mentioned internal disunity within the Marxian conception of revolution through the concept of material productive forces. He argues that the "two phases of the

19. K. Korsch, "State and Counter-revolution," *Modern Quarterly* XI:2 (Winter 1939), p. 65.
20. K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1965), p. 384.

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Marxian revolutionary theory" (before and after the critical year 1850) indicated not only *formal*, but also systematic differences. The disunity lies in the fact that the revolution derives one time entirely from the objective development of material productive forces, at another time, and likewise with the same definiteness, as human activity: "the social revolution of the proletariat is an action of men united in a definite social class and engaged in a war against other social classes, with all the chances and all the risks attached to such a real practical effort."[21]

In any case, unlike the anarchists, Korsch himself insisted on the political character of class struggles, even if his proletarian concept of the political as always shaped by infrastructural activity. That is clearly expressed in his attitude towards the syndicalist forms of struggle and the role of trade unions.

On the Trade Union Question

Korsch repeatedly dealt with trade union problems during the different phases of his political development. When in his article "The Restoration of Marxism in the So-called Trade Union Question" he called for trade unions to consider not just factional and purely organizational aspects but also to proceed from the political essence of union struggles, he again wanted to emphasize Marx's thoughts in the *Poverty of Philosophy*: the economic struggles of the working class are not solely aimed at the improvement of its social position, but more importantly, towards the *formation of the proletariat as a class*. In this context Marx speaks of the analysis which must be given to strikes, coalitions, and *the other forms* whereby the proletariat develops its organization into a class before our own eyes. Korsch is *also* concerned precisely with these other forms of class confrontations which cover the entire breadth of intrastructural action (for example, the struggle of the unorganized, the jobless, the independent industrial councils, the shop stewards movement, wild-cat strikes, etc.), when he argues that the trade union struggle is both the unconditionally necessary presupposition for workers' collective action and the economic form of appearance of the revolutionary class struggle. Furthermore, questions such as the relationship between unions and parties, economic interests and politics, as well as the historical imitations of these organizational forms can be adequately dealt with only from this standpoint of the *constitution* of the proletarian class. This consists in the peculiar dialectic of such organizations: their changing from forms of development into fetters of the class struggle. In the underbrush of different political factions (whose relationship to trade union organizations is considerably more complex than to party organizations), Korsch also attempts to penetrate the main themes of Marx's work to the central standpoint from which the relevant questions can be treated. Since Korsch speaks of the process of the constitution of the proletariat into a class, he assumes that the established unity of political and economic

21. Full quote found in K. Korsch, *Karl Marx* (Frankfurt, 1967), p. 181. Partial translation found in K. Korsch, *Karl Marx* (New York, 1963), p. 210.

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struggles can lead to proletarian revolution. In the *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx had already described this in the apparently contradictory determinations of this process of constitution: on the one hand, the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie begins with its existence, therefore with the economic fact of exploitation; on the other, however, every class struggle is political. Although Korsch agrees with Marx's claim in *Wages, Price and Profit* that "trade unions are necessary as rallying-points of resistance against the forces of capital," he sees this only as one side of proletarian class politics. "These workers' struggles against the economic power of capital led by labor unions—or, under some circumstances, without or against them—are therefore in their essential class nature as political as those against the political power of capital, the bourgeois state, led by the so-called workers' parties—and likewise, under some circumstances, without or against them. The fusion of both forms of struggle into the completely developed, unitary, economic political and revolutionary proletarian class struggle seeking to annihilate the economic and political bourgeois organization of power and to erect in its place the state and the economic power of the revolutionary working class (the revolutionary class dictatorship of the proletariat) will finally reach the goal sought by the isolated 'economic' and 'political' partial struggles of the preceding period (which, in their external manifestations, appeared to pursue other goals): *the constitution of the proletariat as a class.*"[22]

Theory and Constitution

On the basis of this emphatic understanding of praxis and within the context of a rigorously followed dialectic of theory and praxis, Korsch is unwaveringly concerned with deriving criteria of verification and falsification for individual propositions of Marxian social theory from the historically specific development of praxis as a form of the real class struggle. If the dialectical relationship of theory and praxis turns into a simple contradictory relationship, then theory loses its living force and becomes a lifeless system of propositions on the same level as bourgeois science. In the so-called *Zurich Theses* (1950) the "reconstruction of a revolutionary theory and praxis" presupposes immediately "breaking with Marxism's monopolistic claim to revolutionary initiative and to theoretical and practical leadership." Nevertheless, it would be false to attribute to Korsch inclinations towards empiricism from the beginning (as expressed, for example, in his cooperation with Kurt Lewin) and assert that in later years he completely discarded Marxism. Rather, the development of his theory exhibits an immanent logic which, according to its own claims, not only describes and explains individual appearances but, as "a theory of social revolution embracing all domains of social life as a totality," wants to grasp the essence of the capitalist social order and determine its transcending forces. In 1938 Korsch clearly formulated his interpretation of Marxism: in its theoretical form and its main tendency it would be "above all a strictly

22. K. Korsch, "The Restoration of Marxism in the So-called Trade Union Question."

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empirical investigation and critique of society, so in its content it is above all economic research."[23]

Korsch dealt with a multitude of empirical problems: with union wage demands, labor law, the fascist state, political problems such as the Dawes Plan, historical situations such as the Spanish revolution and Stalinism. Striking in this list is not only the lack of political-economic analyses of the capitalist production process and of class structure (apart from smaller, matter-of-fact, insignificant works, as for example the Varga reviews, "Das Problem der Goldinflation in den Vereinigten Staaten" and "Die Theorie der Grundrente bei Varga and Marx"), but also the unmistakable tendency to assume the actual praxis of class struggle as the final reference point for all these analyses. Korsch evidently assumes that propositions concerning the economic basis possess an unchanged and unchangeable validity affecting the entire capitalist social formation. "The critique of Political Economy as embodied in *Capital* deals with the State and the law, and with such 'higher,' i.e., still more ideological, social phenomena as philosophy, art, and religion only in occasional remarks which light up, in sudden flashes, extensive fields of social activity; yet it remains a materialistic investigation into *the whole of existing bourgeois society*. It proceeds methodically from the view that when we have examined the bourgeois mode of production and its historical changes we have thereby examined everything of the structure and development of present-day society which can be the subject-matter of a strictly empirical science. In this sense, Marx's materialistic social science is not sociology, but economics."[24] As a result, economic concepts are objectively valid forms of thought for the entire mode of production (for example, capitalism) whose validity cannot be negated through theoretical sublation, but only through the revolutionary overturning of the existing state of affairs. But if there are these differences in the realm of validity of propositions then, for Korsch, the further development of the critique of political economy is superfluous. By simply presupposing the economic analysis of capitalism, he found the interesting levels of investigation, which indicate the historically variable constellations of social forces, *underneath* this orthodoxy of economic critique. What is lacking are the mediating links between the inner and general law of movement of capital, and the concrete historical developmental process of capitalism.[25] Thus, the only criterion of validity for revolutionary revival of Marxian theory is the praxis of class struggle, the historical movement of emancipation taking place before our own eyes. If, however, the criterion of praxis serves as the foundation of the theory of knowledge, then from the very beginning it appears in Korsch's work in a peculiar contracted way. Praxis as capitalist production, for example, is not really ignored. It remains invariant until the moment of the revolutionary transformation, experiencing no changes arising from the

23. K. Korsch, *Karl Marx* (New York, 1963), p. 234.
24. *Ibid.*
25. Cf. especially the fundamental critique of Ernest Mandel, *Der Spätkapitalismus* (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 14ff.

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concrete social totality which would determine consciousness and action. This perceptible lack of theoretical sense for the "differences of form" of economic relations has far-reaching consequences.

Korsch directed all of the energy of his philosophical critique toward a refutation of the copy or reflection theory. In *Marxism and Philosophy*—a work which sought to achieve the *philosophical*-dialectical restoration along the lines followed by Lenin in dealing with the theory of the state—this is still done with the expectation that it could be made understandable as a mere misunderstanding of Marxian theory. And then with the extreme critical sharpness and practical thoroughness, in 1929, he followed with the "Anti-Kritik" because he had not counted on such a massive rebuffing of his arguments, especially from the Communist Party. In terms of form, of course, there is substantial difference between *Marxism and Philosophy* and the "Anti-Kritik" of six years later. Yet, the content is the same, with one exception: the Leninism stamped by Stalinism is explicitly drawn into the 1929 critique. Korsch's viewpoint can be summarized as follows:

1. Social existence (*Sein*) and the forms of consciousness produced by it cannot be separated from one another, unless one wants to fall back to the level of pre-dialectical, naive realism. Rather, they are components of the material reality constituted as a totality. Yet, in the realm of the ideological superstructure, the economic forms of thought assume a special place as objective, valid categories in a society in which capitalist commodity production predominates.
2. The main danger for revolutionary Marxist theory is not idealism, as Lenin and his philosophical apologists suggest, but the *undialectical materialism* that Korsch recognized very early as not yet fully manifest, emergent variants of positivism, pragmatism, or scientific vulgar materialism—what is today the predominant ideology of the bourgeois class.
3. Leninism designates specific elements of the experience of the Russian labor movement which could also provide the theoretical foundation for the European labor movement. Undoubtedly, Korsch in the "Anti-Kritik" wanted to confront the Leninist theory of reflection. What he actually confronted, however, was the philosophers and party theoreticians of pre-Stalinism. By that time, the propositions of Lenin's *Materialism and Empiriocriticism* already had the coloring of bureaucratic legitimation. This interpretation of Leninist conceptions already indicates the difficulties of a conception of theory reduced to the praxis of class struggle which underhandedly assumes a-historical tendencies. It is impossible to separate the 1908 situation in which Lenin wrote *Materialism and Empiriciocriticism* from the theses of the book which were meant to express unambiguous demarcations, always exhibiting a polemical and militant thrust. In an environment in which idealism is widespread among large groups of the intelligentsia, fideism and religious consciousness are popular among the masses, etc., the *materialist side* of Marxian theory, natural-scientific thought, indeed the materialism of 18th-century Enlightenment philosophy must be emphasized because of the practical needs of a determinate historical situation and not from the perspective of a textually correct

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interpretation of Marxian theory. This is the only way that Lenin's naive epistemological perspective can be explained today and, to a certain extent, justified: "If objective truth exists (as the materialists think), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human 'experience,' is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then all fideism is absolutely refuted."[26]

Of course, Lenin himself attempted to refer back to Marx and Engels in order to substantiate conceptions originating from a specific historical situation and deriving their moment of truth through their sociological and political function. Since, for example, he polemicized against idealistic forms of the identity of thought and being and correctly emphasized their nonidentity (i.e., the impossibility in principle of sublating the *object known* into the *knowing subject*), he also introduced the reflection thesis as a secure and central teaching of Marxian theory. "Social consciousness *reflects* social being —that is Marx's teaching. A reflection may be an approximate true copy of the reflected, but to speak of identity is absurd."[27]

Yet, Lenin neither dreamed of canonizing his writings concerning "militant materialism" nor of allowing his struggle against idealism to become an easily available pretext for censuring thought. For example, in the controversy with Bogdanov, he not only refused to solve philosophical problems through parliamentary decisions or expulsions, but while working on *Empiriocriticism*, he frankly admitted his incompetence in questions of philosophy: "I do not hold myself sufficiently competent in these subjects to hurry to appear in print. But I always carefully followed our party debates on philosophy. . ."[28]

Even in the pre-Stalinist period, when the "Menshevik-tending idealism" of Deborin (*menschewisierenden Idealismus*), along with the "mechanical materialism" of Bukharin were toppled by the party's verdict on them, the reflection theory had already been reified as a pragmatic instrument of party politics. The "natural laws" of society, which, according to Marx, are to be sublated in critical-revolutionary praxis so that men can make their history with will and consciousness, become mere specifications of the basic laws of a dialectic of nature. They retain the validity of real natural laws which copy and reflect the world but cannot be overcome through theory and praxis. Even when Korsch, unlike the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*, adhered to the dialectic of nature, he still saw through the *objectivistic tendency* of Marxist thought which resulted in the destruction of the revolutionary dialectic. "Marx and Engels were dialecticians before they were materialists"[29]—this proposition was meant temporally as well as systematically. The corruption of the revolutionary dialectic is theoretically prepared by the faith in progress ostensibly resting on social natural laws: the hollow pathos which makes victories of defeats, e.g., "We follow Hitler" (*"Nach Hitler kommen wir"*).

26. V.I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (Moscow, 1970), p. 112.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
28. Letter to A.M. Gorky, February 25, 1908, in *Letters to Lenin*, trans. and edited Elizabeth Hill and Doris Mudie (New York, 1937), p. 262.
29. K. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy, op.cit.*, p. 76.

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"Since Lenin and his followers unilaterally transfer the dialectic in Object, Nature and History, and they present knowledge merely as a passive mirror and reflection of this objective Being in the subjective Consciousness. In doing so, they destroy both the dialectical interrelation between *being* and *consciousness* and, as a necessary consequence, the dialectical interrelation between *theory* and *practice*."[30]

As already indicated, Korsch's sensitivity to deformations of Marxian theory led him to persist with the program of unflaggingly applying historical materialism to its own history and of "restoring" the dialectical-revolutionary substance of Marxian theory as the most solid criterion of its empirical content. This insistence on the unfalsified and unabridged doctrine which characterizes Korsch's approach to knowledge also constitutes the historical limitation of his thought. In fact, he cannot really push further his thoroughly convincing critique of the Leninist and especially the Stalinist conceptions since the most important question in this context (namely, *the constitution of objects and the objectivity of experience* mediated by historical praxis) was not *formally* developed by Marx and therefore cannot be simply assimilated. This question brings together all of the difficulties of his thought.

In *History and Class Consciousness* the young Lukács tried to grasp history as an uninterrupted process overturning the forms of objectivity which determine human existence, intellection and perception. Phenomenological theoreticians ground organized scientific experience on the "foundations of sense" within the *Lebenswelt* in which we already live, thus providing the basis for all the epistemological experiences in which we assert ourselves, logically judging and discerning through communication, learning, and tradition. In contrast, the problem for Marxist theory consists in the social derivation of this pre-given horizon of experience in the determination of its self-generated process of production. Today, the subject of these synthetic achievements can neither be a transcendental subject nor a self-constituted subject of the human species. What determines the structure of objects and relations which express the subjective moment of objectification created through labor as well as the moment of material objectification of appropriated nature, is the fundamental contradiction between their quality as use value and as exchange value. For Lukács, this contradiction emerging in the subject of individual proletarians, through which they are simultaneously subject and object, is: speaking, self-activating and at the same time activated commodities (*sich zu sich selbst verhaltende Ware*) and object of the market-mediated value relation. In this model of subject-object dialectic, the identity of subject and object in the proletariat is brought together as a class and as the lever of the *becoming* of consciousness, which is conscious of its social position, and thus of the social totality. In other words: as a commodity, the proletariat is the object of exploitation, while at the same time it is the producer of social wealth and the subject of a new society.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

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Whenever Korsch speaks of constitution in this context, it is a matter of the process of self-constitution of the proletariat as a self-sufficient and unified class. However, the *forms* in which the working class, self-understood as a productive force, modified, co-constituted, and yet remained dependent upon the empirical reality, whose real abstraction of value and forms of appearance (technical rationality, formal law, and bureaucracy) were determined by commodity production—these forms are not questioned by Korsch on the level of historical and materialist investigations. Yet, for one of the crucial problems of Korsch's theory, i.e., the social causes and the critique of reformism, it is important to establish the degree to which the objective world surrounding the proletarian expresses the estrangement of bourgeois commodity production or is the visible result of proletarian action in determinate institutions, relations, or legal regulations so that it is not merely self-deception for the individual proletarian when he identifies with them.

In fact, today the constitution of social objects and the objectivity of experience is determined by a contradictory process rooted in two classes. As far as the achievement of constitution by the bourgeois class is concerned, the individual proletarians are subordinated to the heterogeneous laws of the capitalist form of production and exchange in their ideas, needs and language—indeed, even in their spontaneity. Individual proletarians' perception and thinking is still bound with the naturalistic framework of an antagonistic, commodity producing market society: to capitalist immediacy. On the *other hand*, there are constitutive efforts of the proletarian class, a unifying organization which, as the collective worker (*Gesamtarbeiter*), anticipates the coming society. As a collective subject, it already so structures the objective world under generalized conditions of capitalism that it no longer appears to individual proletarians as totally strange, but is penetrated by elements which belong to them and are products of organized struggle. These contradictorily constituted institutions (e.g., labor courts, plans of co-determination, etc.) allow greater possibilities for identification with the existing system, but also create the need for a more complete appropriation of the objective world (e.g., factory occupations, changing production, etc.).

Korsch illustrated these relations in a series of historical examples. In his theory, however, the mechanism of bourgeois commodity production remains static. In production and in the organization of the productive forces, the organic composition of capital changes so little that the sensual-practical activity—that active conduct of men toward nature in the industrial labor process as expressed in the first thesis on Feuerbach—almost completely loses its material-substantive side which structures the proletariat's behavior and consciousness.

Since Korsch separates the first two levels of the constitution of social reality —namely, *production* and *class struggle*—the specific *forms* in which individual classes change reality also drop out of view. Thus, wholly against his intention, Korsch's theory takes on the character of reflection theory.

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Lenin had already indicated that, as the epistemological criterion of objective truth and objective knowledge, praxis also encompasses such things as astronomical observations, discoveries, etc. Thus, class struggle is only *one* form of object constitution but not yet the predominant one within bourgeois commodity production. Even in advanced class struggles, these struggles still exist under conditions where objects are the reified result of the capitalist mode of production and of bourgeois class domination. In specific modes of production, institutional objective forms constitute the material presuppositions from which every promising class struggle must start—even if its content consists precisely in their overcoming.

Korsch's determinations of the relations of theory and empiricism, of consciousness and being, move *within the already constituted*. Thus, at least in this question, they have lost that reflexive standpoint which had already been reached not only by Marx and Engels, but also by Kantian philosophy. There are systematic reasons for this: they mainly relate to the Korschian *concept of experience*.

In the third volume of *Kapital*, Marx had used the concept of social construction (*gesellschaftliche Konstruktion*) in order to describe the secret deception at the basis of the constitution of the objective reality of experience. "The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus-labor is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled, as it grows directly out of production itself and, in turn, reacts upon it as a determining element. Upon this, however, is founded the entire formation of the economic community which grows up out of the production relations themselves, thereby simultaneously its specific political form. It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers—a relation always naturally corresponding to a definite stage in the development of the methods of labor and thereby its social productivity—which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure (*der ganzen gesellschaftlichen Konstruktion*), and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state. This does not prevent the same economic basis—the same from the standpoint of its main conditions—due to innumerable different empirical circumstances, natural environment, racial relations, external historical influences, etc., from showing infinite variations and gradations in appearance, which can be ascertained only by analysis of the empirically given circumstances."[31] Viewed from the side of the knowing and experiencing subject, this "innermost secret" mediated by production refers to that process of total social constitution which Marx emphasized in the Theses on Feuerbach in opposing the active side of German idealism to intuitive materialism (*anschauendes Materialismus*). The chief deficiency of all previous materialism (the Feuerbachian variety included) is that the object—reality, sensuousness—is only apprehended in the form of objects or perception

31. K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III (Moscow, 1971), pp. 791-792.

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(*Anschauung*) and not as sensuous-human activity, praxis, not subjectively.

To the extent that Korsch does not understand praxis as the concrete totality of production, as the object-constituting processes of struggling classes and of material production processes, his theory splits into three parts which receive different emphasis along side each other in his work. Elements of intuitive materialism are evident in the individual empirical-analytical sciences which basically deal with the "empirically-given circumstances" and the "infinite variations and gradations of appearance"; the science of the capitalist mode of production is analyzed once and for all in the Marxian *Critique of Political Economy* and can only be repeated in individual cases. On the other hand, *where Marxian theory is confirmed as an active historical theory, it is a theory of class struggle.* If over a long period this struggle threatens to lose its visibility (as during the period of prosperity of post-war capitalism), then such a restrictively defined theory loses its real object of knowledge and its justification for existence. Korsch finally drew this conclusion.

As Korsch has clearly recognized, the concept of experience must be at the center of every *materialist science*; for science is nothing but a specific mode of methodically organizing experience. In principle, there are no similarities between the bourgeois and the proletarian organization of experience because the life situations from which they originate and to which they refer are fundamentally different. Only when compared on the level of abstract methodological research (formal logic, technical instruments, operationalization of claims, etc.), do they reveal common aspects. Of course, within ideology the instruments of knowledge arising within the bourgeois division of labor, the professionalization of scientific social thought, and technical rationalization define the exclusive frame of reference within which binding knowledge is considered possible.

Materialist science does not differ from bourgeois science by limiting the horizon of reflection to the proletarian class standpoint or by rejecting available instruments of knowledge. Rather, it differs in its particular conception of truth: *materialist science aims at the historical verification and transformation of what hinders* the scientist and the masses from producing practical knowledge and self-experiences without restraints. It cannot dispense with the practical emancipatory control and feedback of its findings. Materialist science is rooted in a determinate mode of production and is in its form and content drawn towards the *proletarian life situation* where the experiences of the masses are organized in particular ways. The mediations in the experiential continuum between proletarian science and class struggle are entirely lacking in Korsch's theory. There is no mention of the thinglike and reified forms of appearance of the essence of capitalist production which proletarians can experience individually and in isolation as that multiplicity of empirical circumstances and "gradations of appearance" mentioned by Marx. Afraid of falling into the error of vulgar economics, which "insists on the semblance against the law of appearance," the appearances of the capitalist commodity world determining proletarian consciousness and behavior become

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completely meaningless for Korsch. To be sure, in an unpublished article written in 1932 on the "Dialektik des Alltags" ("The Dialectic of the Everyday"), he anticipated the phenomenological mode of observation which later also gained ground within Marxist philosophical discussions of the social *Lebenswelt*. But this analysis was more specifically meant to show the vitality of dialectical thought in everyday experience than with elaborating the constitutive context of theory and empirical research.

But his theory touches yet another problem: what is "objective truth" as contraposed to simple empirical confirmation? One of the passages most frequently cited by Korsch is from the *Communist Manifesto:* theory is "merely an expression of the real historical movement going on under our very eyes."[32] Since here theory must be directed toward the concrete totality of society, this conception has nothing to do with the traditional definition of truth: *adaequatio intellectus atque rei* (the agreement of the conception, of the judgment, with the things examined). Rather, it has more to do with the Hegelian point that an untrue state is a bad one to be historically overcome. Theory describing objective truth provides not only an adequate means for the description of the given social reality, but also contains an *anticipatory structure*, a permanent reaching forward to the true, i.e., revolutionary, transforming praxis. This conception of objective truth is confirmed in the reality it produces, in a changing of the conditions constituting the given. It cannot therefore be conclusively refuted by empirical relations, even if these essentially determine the force giving life to revolutionary theory as well as praxis.

Marx means nothing else when he attacks praxis-less theory in the second thesis on Feuerbach: "The question whether human thinking can arrive at objective truth—is not a theoretical question but a *practical* question. Man has to prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking, in praxis."

The corpus of Korsch's work by no means has a transparent, unitary structure, but there are lines of development which provide continuity. Korsch is *practical* in his increasing isolation from the real class struggles, but theoretically—and that may sound paradoxical—he has broken with Marxian orthodoxy. As no other Marxist theoretician has done, he has tried again and again, with intellectual integrity and determination, to interpret and empirically substantiate every Marxian thesis in the actual events of class struggle. Nevertheless, Korsch regards Marxist theory as a monumental philosophy of transcendence, whose major categories need to be better grounded but not changed. This position was held by him long before he explicitly formulated it in *Karl Marx*. "In *Capital*, the typical form of

32. Literally the *Communist Manifesto* reads: "The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes." Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* Vol. I (Moscow, 1969), p. 120.

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critique...is 'transcendental'."[33] "In this kind of critique, the fundamental economic analysis is not eliminated, but its historically specific limitations are rejected. As a social-historical, practical critique of political economy, Marxist theory remains an economic theory, which is not transformed into a direct historical and social science and praxis."[34]

To be sure, Korsch clearly recognizes the historical limitations of a Marxist theory reduced to its economic form, but until his final break from "Marxism's monopolistic claims," there is no theoretical perspective transcending it, at most perhaps a practical one. In this way Korsch himself blocks the way which could lead to an active further development in Marxist theory.

Since Korsch was such a fanatic for historical specificity, it is surprising that he did not write any theoretically determined material analysis on specific social phenomena. His discussions concerning the union wages, the Dawes Plan, the Spanish collectives, fascism, the Soviet Union, etc., are not stamped with that analytical strength displayed in his work concerning other theories.

There exists a world-historical actuality for revolution, but the revolution is not on the agenda for advanced industrial capitalist countries. This contradiction needs to be grasped theoretically and brought to its practical-organizational consequences. The revolutionary Left has just begun to update a practical-theoretical elaboration of the history of the workers' movement, which has as its political meaning the development of revolutionary perspectives under the special conditions of existence found in highly industrialized capitalist countries. For this project, the updating and appropriation of Korsch's thought is an indispensable step. His theory, which seismographically records a half-century of contradictions, catastrophes, defeats and triumphs of the proletarian emancipatory movement, resists any affirmative use oriented around institutional needs. In its substantial content as practical knowledge, Korsch's theory is a critical-revolutionary theory, in decisive opposition to Marxism as a science of legitimation.

33. See the German edition of *Karl Marx, op.cit.*, p. 221.
34. *Ibid.*

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Theory of the Crisis and the Problem of Constitution*

by Giacomo Marramao

1.

It is still widely held that the theory of the crisis and collapse of the capitalist system is inherited from the positivist deformation of the "Marxism of the Second International," and that it thus implies ideological support for reformist politics. Ten years ago, Raniero Panzieri wrote: "As a matter of fact, Marxist thought since Marx has recognized the appearance of a 'turn' in the system with the development of monopoly capitalism and of imperialism around the 1870s (which today appears to us as a transitional period in relation to the 'turn' that began in the 1930s and is now being completed). But the analysis and description of the phase following that turn was immediately framed in terms of laws that such a phase tended to overcome. Thus, it was interpreted as a 'final phase'."[1] And, in a note, he added: "The mythology of the 'last stage' of capitalism exists with differing, even opposite, ideological functions both in Lenin and in Kautsky: in Lenin, to 'legitimize' the breakdown of the system at the less advanced points of its development; in Kautsky, to sanction the reformist postponement of revolutionary action until the 'correct time.' Since the 1917 revolution failed to consolidate itself with revolutions in more advanced countries, it fell back on objectives immediately realizable within Russia's level of development. This would-be explanation of the possible presence of capitalist social relations in planning (a shortcoming remaining in the whole development of Leninist thought) will later facilitate the repetition, whether in the factories or in total social production, of capitalist forms behind the ideological screen of identifying socialism with planning and the possibility of 'socialism in one country'."[2]

Here, in addition to the *Zusammenbruchstheorie*, Panzieri attacked the method which was transferred from the Second to the Third International—i.e., an optimistic conception of the historical process that appealed to the automatic development of the "final phase" of capitalism. He sought to reintroduce the active, political, revolutionary perspective in the Marxist discourse against a vulgar positivism that regarded the fatal crisis of the

*Translated from the Italian by Laurette Fiocchi and Wayne Heimbach.

1. R. Panzieri, "Plusvalore e Pianificazione. Appunti de Lettura del *Capitale*," *Quaderni Rossi* 4 (1964), p. 287; now reprinted in an anthology of Panzieri's writings, *La Ripresa del Marxismo—Leninismo in Italia*, edited by D. Lanzardo (Milan, 1972), pp. 329ff.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287n.

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system as an unavoidable phenomenon resulting from the simple quantitative development of the productive forces. Panzieri's polemic was aimed against the pragmatic use, within the labor movement, of the argument of the "objective" and "necessary" character of the laws governing capitalist development. This pragmatic use tended to overshadow or render secondary the contradiction between capital and labor, and the urgency of developing "workers' control" within the entire productive process. The desire to provide a theoretical foundation for this project had Panzieri digging into the Marxist critique of political economy in order to trace the lines of an analytical development that would allow an unambiguous location of the "law of the plan" and of the "law of value." From the first to the third volume, the development of Marx's argument thus coincided with the historical development of contemporary capitalism from its competitive to the monopolistic phase. The "plan" was not considered as a single or concrete programmatic project but, rather, as social capital's mode of functioning in the historically determined form of its development. Thus, in order to eliminate every "naturalist" residue from the theory of development, it was necessary to demonstrate the previous overcoming of the dichotomy (still present in Marx, especially in the first volume of *Capital*) between despotism in the factory and anarchy in civil society. It was also necessary to show that the "dynamic of the capitalist process is essentially dominated by the law of concentration" and, going beyond Marx, that the highest stage of development whereby capital becomes "autonomous" is not finance capital but "planned capital." According to Panzieri's conclusions, every trace of the origins of the capitalist process disappears with the advent of centralized planning because of the obsolescence of a "mode of production which is 'unconscious,' anarchic, and tied to activities not controlled by competition."[3] On this level, the increasing cohesion of the system can be seen in its entirety as completely autonomous with respect to the agents of production. On the overall social level, this process is characterized by the same despotic rationality at work in the modern factory—a rationality which avails itself of the immense possibilities of capitalist use of science and technology.[4] Taking up a fundamental problem—whose complexity Marx himself had emphasized in the *Grundrisse*—Panzieri concluded that the "immanent contradictions" have completely lost their naturalist character, typical of the competitive period. "There are no 'immanent contradictions' in the movement of capitals, nor are there any 'internal' to capital: the only limit to the development of capital is not capital itself but working class resistance."[5]

3. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

4. This can be seen in Panzieri's other important work, "Sull'uso Capitalistico della Macchine nel Neo-capitalismo," in *La Ripresa del Marxismo-Leninismo in Italia, op.cit.*, pp. 148ff.

5. R. Panzieri, "Plusvalore e Pianificazione," *op.cit.*, p. 270. This rather substantial revision of Marxism was not merely an historical correction (i.e., an adjustment of Marx's theory in terms of post-war capitalist developments). It upset the fundamental methods of dialectical exposition

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We will see, later on, whether and to what extent this reading of Marx can actually develop a comprehensive social theory of revolution once it eradicates the 'natural' character from the capitalist process. For the present, we are interested in showing how, at the beginning of the 1960s in Italy, an argument common to a large part of the European left in the 1920s and 1930s was proposed by a militant opposition within the labor movement: that revolutionary action should not attempt to insert itself into the presumed weaknesses and "internal contradictions" of the system, but should activate only the autonomous will, the modern "insubordination" of the working class —its exclusive organizability.

2.

If we scan the documents of the 1920s and 1930s dealing with this problem, we notice that the equation of the *Zusammenbruchstheorie* with a reformist and opportunistic conception of politics is based on a rather schematic and reductionist conception of the history of Marxism and of the labor movement.[6] The example of Luxemburg can help us get rid of this scheme.

(*Darstellung*) of the critique of political economy. This exposition is "dialectical" in that it expresses the movement of negativity *immanent* to the general concept of capital and to the structure of commodities as the "cellular form" of capitalist society. Thus, the dialectical quality of this "method of exposition" consists in its comprehension of the movement of categories as a self-contradictory movement of capital, as a self-criticism of the system in terms of the very categorical objectivity, the very "bourgeois point of view." Cf. *Capital*, Vol. III (New York, 1967), p. 259. This self-criticism refers to the historical, and thus transitional, character of the mode of production based on commodity exchange. For Marx, "*First of all, there is a limit, not inherent to production generally, but to production founded on capital.*" Cf. K. Marx, *Grundrisse* (Middlesex, 1973), p. 415. The horizon of this limit, which is represented by capital itself, and the self-contradictory movement of capital is shown by Marx in the dialectic of limit (*Grenze*) and obstacle (*Schranke*). "To begin with: capital forces the workers beyond necessary labour to surplus labour. Only in this way does it realize itself, and create surplus value. But on the other hand, it presupposes necessary labour only *to the extent* and *insofar as* it is surplus labor and the latter is *realizable* as *surplus labour*. It posits surplus labour, then, as a condition of the necessary, and surplus labour as a *limit* (*Grenze*) of objectified labour (*vergegenständlichte Arbeit*), of value as such. When it can no longer posit value it cannot posit necessary labour; and, given its foundation, it cannot be otherwise. It therefore restricts labour and the creation of value—by an artificial check, as the English express it—and it does so on the same grounds as and to the same extent that it posits surplus labour and surplus value. By its nature, therefore, it posits a barrier (*Schranke*) to labour and value-creation, in contradiction to its tendency to expand them boundlessly. And in as much as it both posits a barrier *specific* to itself, and on the other side equally drives over and beyond *every* barrier, it is the living contradiction." "Since value forms the foundation of capital," continues Marx in the note at the foot of the page, "and since it therefore necessarily exists only through an exchange for *counter-value*, it thus necessarily repels itself from itself. A *universal capital* (*Universalkapital*), one without alien capitals confronting it, which it exchanges—and from the present standpoint, nothing confronts it but wage labourers or itself—is therefore a non-thing. The reciprocal exclusion of capitals *is already contained in capital* [emphasis added—G.M.] as realized exchange value" (*ibid.*, p. 421).

It is evident that the profound dialectical significance (not reducible to an 'allegory' or to a 'metaphor') of this "exposition" would collapse if the limit to the development of capital were not provided by "capital itself." The collaspe of the limit-obstacle dialectic would present difficulties for an analysis of the movement of capital, and thus also for the theoretical possibility of a *critique* of political economy.

6. This argument was developed by Dario Lanzardo in his introduction to R. Panzieri, *La Ripresa del Marxismo-Leninismo in Italia, op.cit.*, pp. 72-73.

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Even if it was claimed that the very Luxemburgian conception of the crash reflects Second International themes, the question of the relationship between economic theory (deterministic-catastrophic) and political theory (activist-spontaneist) in Rosa—which at this level can only appear paradoxical—would still remain open. The problem is thus considerably more complex and intricate than is indicated by traditional and convenient simplifications provided by European and "Western" Marxism.

In a 1933 essay addressed precisely to this problem, Korsch already pointed out the impossibility of reconciling opponents and supporters of the crisis theory within a *political* common denominator. The *Zusammenbruchstheorie* had in fact been challenged with surprisingly similar arguments both by the founder of revisionism, Eduard Bernstein, as well as by the council communist, Pannekoek; while it was supported by Luxemburg as well as the "arch-reformist" Heinrich Cunow.[7] But then Korsch himself ended up by proposing a solution which traced all positions back to the common ideological common denominator of the theory of the crisis and, having established their determinist and passive character, rejected them *en bloc* as simple *reflections* of the class struggle.[8] Within the context of the theory of the crisis, Korsch distinguished two *attitudes* corresponding to two different ways of understanding the catastrophic mechanism of development: the *subjectivist* attitude, corresponding to the official social-democratic version typical of theoreticians such as Hilferding, Bernstein, Lederer, Tarnow and Naphtali; and the *objectivist* attitude, represented by Rosa Luxemburg's "classic" theory of the crash, Fritz Sternberg and Henryk Grossmann. The subjectivist attitude maintains that the crisis can be overcome by the capitalist system, with the help of a general cartel (Hilferding's *Generalkartell*) and by means of regulations of capital-labor relations. According to Korsch, not only the

7. See K. Korsch, "Ueber einige grundsätzliche Voraussetzungen für eine materialistische Diskussion der Krisentheorie," in *Proletarier Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis des Rate-kommunismus* 1 (1933); republished in Korsch-Mattick-Pannekoek, *Zusammenbruchtstheorie des Kapitalismus oder revolutionäres Subjekt*, with a preface by Paul Mattick (West Berlin, 1973), p. 92. For a discussion on the crisis theory in the Bernstein Debate, see Lucio Colletti, "Bernstein and the Marxism of the Second International," in *From Rousseau to Lenin* (London, 1972), pp. 45-108. For the historical and political background of the debate see K. Mandelbaum's dissertation, *Die Erörterungen innerhalb der deutschen Sozialdemokratie über das Problem des Imperialismus* (Frankfurt, 1926), pp. 32-42.

8. For Korsch it could be said that "the entire historical development of socialist theories of the crisis, from Fourier and Sismondi through the various chronological phases of Marx's and Engels' theory, the "Marxist" and epigone phase, and up to Sternberg and Grossmann, Lederer and Naphtali, can be seen as a mere passive reflection of the objective economic developments that had preceded them. From the same perspective and beyond the confines of the theory of the crisis, one could also see all of the major struggles that have taken place within the socialist movement in the last forty years as mere derivative phenomena and reflections of crises that have immediately preceded them in the cycle of capitalist crisis" (*op.cit.*, p. 93). Clearly, Korsch's critique is more complex and articulate (especially since he is not hindered by the illusion of being able to find a revolutionary version of the theory of the crisis) but essentially it is no different from an anonymous article in the same journal: "Die Grundlagen einer revolutionären Krisentheorie," *Proletarier Zeitschrift . . .*, 1 (1933); now in Korsch-Mattick-Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, pp. 71ff.

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social democrats but Bolshevik and Soviet economic planners as well, who are also subjective theorists of the crisis, revert to Hilferding's theory. "This type of crisis theory," he writes, "is characterized by that *ideological reflection* of *past* stages of the real movement of capitalist economy, counterposing it to the present changed reality as fixed and rigid 'theory'."[9] The practical consequences of these theories is the "*complete destruction of all the objective bases of the proletarian class movement.*" The objectivist attitude—which Korsch considers only *apparently* counterposed to the subjectivist—was articulated in its "classic form" by Rosa Luxemburg in the *Accumulation of Capital.* This theory "cannot really be seen as materialist nor, in its practical impact, revolutionary, with respect to the theory of the crisis." The "objectivist" deformation of this position cannot be suppressed by claiming, with its supporters, that the existing system can be overturned only by means of active intervention by the proletariat. "Such a theory. . . ," writes Korsch, "does not seem to me capable of producing that fully autonomous and responsible activity on the part of the working class struggling for its own ends which is necessary to the workers' class struggle as it is in every other struggle."[10]

Korsch counterposes the "materialist attitude" to the other two: "This attitude considers as meaningless for a practical theory of proletarian revolution the entire problem of the objective necessity or inevitability of capitalist crises when posed in these general terms. This attitude parallels that of the revolutionary critic of Marx, Georges Sorel, who no longer assigns the value of scientific forecast to the catastrophe produced by working class insurrection—presented by Marx in a dialectical language strongly tainted by idealistic-philosophical elements—by giving it instead the value of a 'myth' the entire significance of which is reduced to the determination of the working class's *present* activity. The materialist attitude and Sorel, however, part ways when he tries to *limit* the function of every future social theory of revolution to the creation of such a myth. Rather, this approach suggests that, through an ever more meticulous empirical examination of the present mode of capitalist production and of its main developmental tendencies, certain forecasts can be made which, however limited, are sufficient for practical action."[11] Thus, in order to determine his action, the materialist must empirically explore the present situation, the level of consciousness, the level of organization and the working class's disposition toward the struggle. The basic principles of this "basically *materialist* attitude, both *theoretically as well as practically*" were given their classic formulation in 1894 by the young Lenin in his polemic on Michailowski's populist subjectivism and Struve's objectivism. Lenin counterposed his own "activist-materialist viewpoint" to these two positions.

9. Korsch, *op.cit.*, p. 96.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

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3.

Let us pause a moment to examine the salient points and implications of this interesting work by Korsch. First of all, we must question the meaning of reducing all the theoretical positions of German Social Democracy and of the Second International (whether right or left) to passive and non-committal conceptions because they limit themselves to *reflecting* on the elapsed stages of the real movement (which for Korsch is represented by class conflicts, by practical and political clashes among the various tendencies and currents within the labor movement). Certainly, it helps here to consider the particular time in which Korsch wrote these lines. We are in 1933, the period immediately following the rise of fascism in Germany. The success of the national-socialist dictatorship had not yet destroyed the residual hopes for a workers' insurrection. This is why it is necessary to carry out the *whole* theoretical discussion in terms of an analysis of the present in its most empirical, particular aspects, which are absolutely not deducible from a general and abstract theoretical construction. Even the appeal to the Sorelian "myth" and to Lenin's "activist-materialist" position[12] must be seen in this perspective as meant to stress the urgency to mobilize workers for the struggle against fascism. But however necessary, this rigorous historical consideration is not enough. In fact, this work contains a contradictory motive that cannot be resolved purely by reference to the political exigencies of the moment, since it is a constant feature of Korsch's discourse which, despite its greater complexity and breadth, he shares with a large part of the communist *and* socialist left between the two wars.[13] Korsch seems to grasp the need for a political and revolutionary interpretation of the "scientific description" of *Capital*, and thus to read the critique of political economy in connection with the theory of classes and of revolution. But, in the rush to bring the discussion, *without interruption*, back to the requirements of a "practical theory of proletarian revolution," he ends up by avoiding one of the crucial dimensions in the work of the mature Marx. It is precisely by doing so that he

12. This *positive* reference to Lenin is rather surprising in that by the end of the 1920s he had already broken with Leninism and, in the "Anti-kritik" of 1930, he had even stated that his adherence to the Leninist concept expressed in *Marxism and Philosophy* was the result of a misunderstanding. See "The Present State of the Problem of *Marxism and Philosophy*," in *Marxism and Philosophy* (London, 1970), pp. 98-144. If the use of the Leninist theory (or at least the reference to Lenin) has survived the theoretical and political *Selbstverständigung* of the late 1920s, then it cannot really be explained by the subjectivistic category of "misunderstanding." As usual, the solution to this problem in Korsch requires a deeper and more objective analysis. Cf. some of the discussions within *Linkskommunismus* and *Linkssozialismus* between the two wars as dealt with by H.M. Bock, *Sundikalismus und Linkskommunismus von 1918-1923* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969); H. Drechsler, *Die sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1965); K.H. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der KPD-Opposition* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1964); and O. Ihlau, *Die roten Kämpfer* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1969).

13. It would be useful to trace the analogies between Korsch and Max Adler—an author to whom insufficient attention has been paid. Cf. A. Zanardo, "Aspetti del Socialismo Neokantiano in Germania negli Anni della Crisi del Marxismo," *Annali Feltrinelli* III (1960), pp. 153-165, as well as the interesting comparative treatment of the council conceptions of Korsch and Adler developed by U. Cerroni in *Teoria Politica e Specialismo* (Rome, 1973), pp. 75-83.

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can uncompromisingly reject all theories of the crisis, *regardless* of their methodological and epistemological foundations, as abstract constructions which, *as such*, can only be passive reflections of the real movement. Korsch thus avoids the complex problem of the "method of exposition"[14] when, in his urgency to work out an economic analysis able to provide a "practical theory of revolution" supported by an "activist-materialist attitude," he reads the dialectical method of presentation of the mature Marx as a mere *allegory*[15] meant to rouse the proletariat's will and revolutionary spirit.[16] Thus, Korsch ruled out the possibility of differentiation between the various methodological and epistemological foundations of the different theories of the crisis which throw light on their function within the general vision of the historical movement and the relationship between theory and practice. As a result, Korsch did not see that Luxemburg's theory of the crash was different from the one formulated by Kautsky in the 1906 preface to the fifth German edition of Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, not only because of a difference of "attitude" (which is, in the last analysis, a subjective difference), but rather because of a different value assigned to the function of economic "description" within Marxist theory. Luxemburg never conceived of the model she described in the *Accumulation of Capital* as a pure and simple "reflection" of historical and empirical evolution of the capitalist mode of

14. The difference between the *method of research* and the *method of exposition* is spelled out by Marx in the Postscript (January 1873) to the second German edition of *Capital*: "the method of presentation," writes Marx, "must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyze its different forms of development, to trace their interconnections. Only after this work is done can the actual movement be adequately described. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror, then it may appear as if we had before us a mere apriori construction." Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1965), p. 19. For problems connected to the above distinction and the general relation between Logic and History in Marx, see C. Luporini, "Marx secondo Marx," in *Dialettica e Materialismo* (Rome, 1975), pp. 213ff.

15. This pragmatic reduction of the dialectical and morphological aspect of the critique of political economy is a *topos* which connects the European "theoretical left" (often through Sorel, but in forms and ways which still need to be historically specified) to Bernstein and to the revisionist current of social democracy. Korsch's reference to Sorel should be historically (and theoretically) clarified in connection with the Bernsteinian revision of the theme of "industrial democracy" which constitutes, next to the anarcho-syndicalist vein, the other source of Korsch's "conception of the councils" derived from the "Fabian Society." Cf. K. Korsch, "Die Fabian Society," in *Die Tat*, IV:8 (November, 1912), pp. 422-427; "What Is Socialization?" in *New German Critique* 6 (Fall 1975); and *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte* (Frankfurt, 1969). For Korsch's theoretical and political formation, see M. Buckmiller, "Marxismus als Realität. Zur Rekonstruktion der theoretischen und politischen Entwicklung Karl Korschs," *Ueber Karl Korsch*, edited by Claudio Pozzoli (Frankfurt, 1973), esp. pp. 19-35.

For a comprehensive and peremptory treatment of the European council movement in relation to *Linkskommunismus*, cf. M. Cacciari's "Sul Problema dell'Organizazione Germania 1917-1921," which appeared as an introduction to G. Lukács, *Kommunismus 1920-1921* (Padua, 1972). The same points are developed by S. Bologna in his "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party at the Origin of the Worker-Councils Movement," *Telos* 13 (Spring 1972), pp. 3-27; and G. De Masi, "L'Esperienza Conciliare nella Rivoluzione Tedesca," in *I Consigli Operai* (Rome, 1972), pp. 86-118.

16. Cf. K. Korsch, "Ueber einige grundsätzliche Voraussetzungen...," *op.cit.*, pp. 97-98. Here Korsch probably has in mind the famous passage in *Capital* (ending with *the expropriation of the expropriators*) in which Marx connected the concentration-impoverishment process and "working class rebellion." Cf. *Capital*, Vol. I, *op.cit.*, pp. 763-764.

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production. Rather, against Kautsky, she always refused to attribute the character of fetishistic objectivity to economic laws.[17]

4.

Returning to Korsch, there is another surprising point in his exposition which indirectly confirms the shortcomings of his approach to the theory of the crisis: the association of Fritz Sternberg and Henryk Grossmann as "epigones of the Luxemburgian theory." Actually, these two economists were so far from being epigones that, at the acme of the problem of the crisis in 1929, they engaged in one of the harshest and most interesting polemics on imperialism. In his vast work on imperialism,[18] Sternberg had taken up and integrated Luxemburg's partial revision of Marxist theory which related expanded reproduction and expansion in "non-capitalist areas." Grossmann, however, maintained that the capitalist system's tendency to crisis and "collapse" could only be explained *on the basis of the Marxist theory of value.* "The law of value," writes Grossmann in his basic work on the law of accumulation and the collapse of the capitalist system, "dominates the entire economic process of the capitalist mechanism and, since its dynamic and developmental tendencies cannot be understood except on the basis of this law, its end—the collapse—must also be explained on the basis of the law of value."[20] The error of Luxemburg and Sternberg—which led them to a

17. One could discuss (apart from the economic "errors" contained in her book) the completeness of her methodological self-reflection and the oscillations and incongruencies present in her various formulations of the agreement between economic and political moments, between spontaneity and the political and revolutionary direction of the masses. In the above-cited essay, Bologna observes that "Rosa finds herself caught between the sociology of organization and the theory of the party" (*op.cit.*, p. 17). This type of "ambivalence" can be reduced to the fact that, "What for Luxemburg was a problem of the social composition of the party, for Lenin was a problem of program, or of the party's policy. For Lenin worker's revolutionary direction was to be attained by tying militants to this program and thus disciplining them to centralization. Rosa and Lenin speak of two different types of working class: they spoke against two different types of reformism" (*ibid.*, p. 21). More scholastic and formalistic is Cacciari's approach, which dismisses Luxemburg's argument as "democratic-libertarian" (cf. *op.cit.*, p. 62). Moreover, Cacciari provides a rather inadequate treatment of the *Zusammenbruchstheorie*, which he equates entirely with the Luxemburg model characterized by "a constant tendency to under-consumption" and by "an unbearable production-market contradiction" (*ibid.*, p. 63). But it is precisely this incongruence and this dualism (producing a splitting of the political-strategic dimension) in Luxemburg which was criticized by the "theoretician of collapse," Henryk Grossmann.

18. Cf. Fritz Sternberg, *Der Imperialismus* (Berlin, 1926).

19. Sternberg's integration of Luxemburg's theory consists in individuating the phenomenon of overpopulation as a constitutional condition of capitalism (without a reserve army of labor there cannot be a surplus of wage labor and therefore a surplus of value). Moreover, Sternberg maintains that Luxemburg committed important errors, especially in the conclusions of her analyses. He does not accept, for example, the Luxemburgian claim of the impossibility of expanded reproduction in "pure" capitalism and—agreeing with Bukharin's criticism in *Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital* (New York, 1972), which is published together with Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital—An Anti-Critique*—maintains that it is also possible in state capitalism, since the latter can destroy part of the surplus value (see Sternberg, *op.cit.*, p. 102).

20. H. Grossmann, *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen*

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revision and "integration" of Marx's work on expanded reproduction—was the result of an erroneous assumption: in Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital* as well as in Sternberg's *Imperialism* the crisis was not explained in terms of *production*, but in terms of the *market*. This is why it is impossible to pull together the continuity and the structural connection between the *re*productive process and the capital-labor relations on the one hand, and the need to introduce the safety-valve of "non-capitalist areas" (resulting in a significant twist of the Marxist problem of production and reproduction into a problem of "realization" of surplus value.) Through a systematic self-reflexion, however, Grossmann succeeded in posing the question in terms of an analysis of the *relations of production*, within whose dynamic he sought the general developmental tendency of the capitalist mode of production.[21] Basing his work on the two-fold dimension of determining reality and of abstract generality (with respect to the historical and empirical movement) of the law of value, he ended up connecting it to the theory of the crisis *by means of the law of accumulation*. "The great significance of Marx's work lies precisely in the fact that it is able to explain all the phenomena of the capitalist mode of production on the basis of the law of value."[22] The "Marxist theory of collapse is...a necessary supposition for the comprehension of the Marxist theory of the crisis and it is intimately connected to it. The solution to both problems is in the Marxist law of accumulation, *which constitutes the central idea of Capital* and is in turn founded on the law of value."[23] Thus, far from being the work of an "epigone" Grossmann's book carried out the "return to Marx" prefigured by Luxemburg against the reformist revisionism of Bernstein and the

Systems (Leipzig, 1929), p. 13. In this volume, Grossmann provided a brilliant critique to Sternberg's work written the previous year: "Eine neue Theorie über Imperialismus und soziale Revolution," in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, XIII (1928), pp. 141-92. Sternberg responded with a pamphlet entitled *Eine Umwälzung der Wissenschaft? Kritik des Buches von Henryk Grossmann. Zugleich eine positive Analyse des Imperialismus* (Berlin, 1930). For an analysis of underconsumption from the perspective of the Marxist theory of value and, in general, for all of the specifically economic aspects of the problem see M. Cogoy, "Les Theories Neo-marxistes, Marx et l'Accumulation du Capital," in *Les Temps Modernes* (September-October, 1972), pp. 396-427 and F. Hermanin, "Ueber einige Aspekte der Akkumulations- und Krisentheorie bei Grossmann und Mattick," in F. Hermanin, M. Lauer, A. Schurmann, *Drei Beiträge zur Methode und Krisentheorie bei Marx* (Giessen, 1973), pp. 85-111.

21. Among Grossmann's theoretical and methodological works are *Marx, die klassische Nationalökonomie und das Problem der Dynamik* (Frankfurt and Vienna, 1969); "Die Aenderung des ursprünglichen Aufbauplans des Marxschen *Kapital* und ihre Ursachen," in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* XIV (1929), pp. 305-338; "Die Wert-Preistransformation bei Marx und das Krisenproblem," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* I (1932), pp. 55-84; "Die Goldproduktion in Reproduktionsschema von Marx und Rosa Luxemburg," in *Festschrift für Carl Günberg zum 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1932), pp. 152-184; "The Evolutionist Revolt against Classical Economics," in *The Journal of Political Economy* LI (1943), pp. 381-396, and pp. 506-522. These are now collected in H. Grossmann, *Aufsätze zur Krisentheorie* (Frankfurt, 1971). For an analysis of the epistemological basis of Grossmann's theory, see my "Political Economy and Critical Theory," *Telos* 24 (Summer 1975), pp. 56-80.

22. H. Grossmann, *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz..., op.cit.*, p. 608.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

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Austro-Marxist "neo-harmonizers"[24] as well as Kautsky's pseudo-orthodox and positivist scholasticism. Thus, Grossmann salvaged Rosa's political application, recasting it on a former analytical and methodological basis. Not by chance, it is this work of Grossmann which, in the early thirties (a year after the appearance of the previously discussed article by Korsch revived an important discussion within *Linkskommunismus* on the connection between the theory of the crash and revolutionary subjectivity.

5.

The protagonists of the polemic carried out in the columns of the *"Rätecorrespondenz,"* the theoretical organ of the "council communists," are Anton Pannekoek and Paul Mattick. In his contribution to the discussion, Pannekoek addressed to Grossmann a criticism similar to the one that Korsch had made regarding all theories of the crisis with major economic pretenses but with far less clarity. Starting with the assumption that "the question of the necessity and inevitability of the capitalist collapse, and of the way in which this is understood is, for the working class and for its understanding and its tactics, the most important of all questions,"[25] he then ended up criticizing Grossmann from a basically external perspective.[26] Pannekoek's criticisms of Grossmann are basically that he wants to deduce the end of capitalism "from a purely economic viewpoint" (and thus of conceiving the crash "independently of human intervention"), and of reducing the class struggle to an "economistic" contest, i.e., of defining it as a struggle for wages and reduction of working hours. Thus, he ended up liquidating, more thoroughly and radically than Korsch had done, the whole theory of the crash from Luxemburg to Grossmann, by anchoring the theory to a deterministic and "bourgeois" concept of "historical necessity."[27] On a closer analysis, however,

24. "The fact," writes Grossmann to Paul Mattick in a letter of July 18, 1937, "that the clique of neo-harmonists, the Hilferdings and the Bauers, have for decades systematically tried to distort Marx, does not mean that *we* should likewise follow the neo-harmonists. Once you think Marxian thought consistently to the end, how can a crisis arise in the simple reproduction process which seems to be characterized everywhere by such a harmonious equilibrium? Only then will you discover in Marx theoretical elaborations of which the 'philosophers' have not even dreamed, even those such as Karl Korsch, who imagined that they understood some Marxian economics." In the appendix to *Marx, die klassische Nationalökonomie und das Problem der Dynamik, op.cit.*, pp. 112-113.

25. Cf. A. Pannekoek, "Die Zusammenbruchstheorie des Kapitalismus," in *Rätekorrespondenz* 1 (1934), now reprinted in Korsch-Mattick-Pannekoek, *Zusammenbruchstheorie . . ., op.cit.*, pp. 20ff.

26. Pannekoek uncritically restated the objection to Grossmann made by many "professional economists," i.e., of having shown the inevitability of the crash through Otto Bauer's scheme. Cf. "Die Akkumulation des Kapitals," *Die Neue Zeit* XXXI (1912-13), pp. 831-838, 862-874. The objection would make sense only if Grossmann had really meant to provide a schematic representation of the crash. But Grossmann denied the possibility of such a description. His actual aim was to show the impossibility of harmonious development starting from Bauer's premises. Cf. *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz, op.cit.*, pp. 95ff. The same objection to Grossmann was put forth by Sweezy in *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York, 1968), pp. 209-213. On this subject see also Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Marxschen "Kapital"* (Frankfurt and Vienna, 1968).

27. A. Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

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it turns out that this criticism of Grossmann's "economism" could at the same time be addressed to Pannekoek since *it was he himself who was tied to a restricted "bourgeois" concept of economics.*

This is precisely the point of Mattick's important criticism. Pannekoek, Mattick points out, did not succeed in understanding the *dialectical* character of Grossmann's development, founded on a specifically Marxist methodological base. The method by which the critique of political economy proceeds is not aimed at the historical and empirical description of real processes, but at the abstract isolation of certain fundamental moments, in order to define the unity of the laws of movement of capitalist society. "For Grossmann, too," notes Mattick, "there are no purely economic problems. Yet, that does not prevent him, in his analysis of the law of accumulation, from *methodologically* limiting himself to the definition of purely economic presuppositions and thus to *theoretically* reach an objective limit of the system. The *theoretical understanding* whereby the capitalist system must necessarily collapse because of its internal contradictions *does not imply at all* that the *real collapse* is an automatic process, independent of men."[28]

The limits of Pannekoek's Marxism can be seen when, after having ruled out any "practical utility" for the theory of the crisis, he goes on to propose a positive solution to the problem of the connection between economics and politics: between the objective and subjective moments. Starting from the assumption that "Marxist economics cannot be grasped without an understanding of the historical and materialist way of thinking," he *immediately* seeks to resolve, in an undifferentiated unity, the objective-subjective, being-consciousness, economic-political relationship: "The economy, as a totality of men who work and make do for their basic needs, and politics (in a broad sense) as a totality of men who work and struggle as a class for their basic needs, constitute a single sphere developing according to precise laws."[29] What we have here is, on the one hand, an undifferentiated unity, and on the other, an abstract dualism of two camps which, in terms so defined, remain absolutely unmediated. If economics can be reduced to a simply laboring and instrumental activity, and politics to a mere autonomous and voluntary activity, their unity cannot be other than an empty form or a moral postulate. To the declared unity of theory and practice we can then compare, in Pannekoek, the opposite couple, or better, the hypostatized polar copresence, economism-voluntarism. But, and what is most important, this incongruence is neither a result of personal irrelevance nor an exclusively

28. P. Mattick, "Zur Marxschen Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchstheorie," in *Rätekorrespondenz* 4 (1934), now in Korsch-Mattick-Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-48. Mattick's points are significant not only because they run counter to a general tendency of left communism (and socialism), but also, and what is more important, because they go beyond narrow theoretical and political confines, thus unknowingly touching on a general political weakness of European Marxism, noticeable in the wavering between a speculative and a pragmatic version of the relation between theory and practice.

29. A. Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

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historical limitation of a discussion of the 1930s.[30] Actually, the *same type of criticism of the theory of the crash and the same type of appeal to subjectivity* can be found in reformist theoreticians of social democracy such as Hilferding and Braunthal. Even before the *Marx-Renaissance* characterized by the works of the young Lukács and Korsch and destined to assume major proportions with the publication of Marx's early philosophic writings, the Austro-Marxist theoreticians were the ones who inaugurated in European Marxism that "season of subjectivity" consisting of an active re-reading of Marxist work, filtered through neo-Kantian themes.[31]

Although it represented a change in emphasis in the theoretical and political debate within the labor movement, both in the neo-Kantian Austro-Marxists and in the majority wing of the *Linkscomminismus* this appeal to subjectivity had as a consequence an epistemological *restriction* of the field defined in Marx as the social relations of production. The sociological and empirical analysis of the "real" comes up against the vindication of the (ethical-universal) subjective factor. Thus, instead of characterizing the tendential laws of the mode of production, economic analysis ends up as an exercise in microsociology. To the empirical reduction of categorical

30. To realize the relevance of this problem one need only examine the polemics generated by the Habermasian critique around the concept of "work" in Marx. Cf. J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971), chapter 1, paragraph 2. In this respect, see also H.-J. Krahl's polemic, "Produktion und Klassenkampf," in *Konstitution und Klassenkampf* (Frankfurt, 1971), p. 392ff. "Habermas," notes Krahl, "can throw a restricted concept of praxis in Marx's face only because he has a restricted concept of production. According to Marx, production includes all the elements of social praxis, i.e., the subjective-objective relation and intersubjectivity, work and the division of labor. Habermas, instead, reduces the concept of production to a non-intersubjective subject-object relationship of instrumental activity, i.e., to an instrumental concept of work. The price paid by Habermas for such a reduction of the concept of production is the dematerializaton of intersubjectivity which he characterizes with the abstract title of interaction, or the dematerialization of revolutionary praxis..." (*ibid.*, p. 394).

31. Within the labor movement, neo-Kantianism (and, in general, the influence of all those philosophical currents characterized by the centrality of the subject) did not emerge, as the history of ideas would require, from the new results of scientific and epistemological research, abstractly demonstrating the "erroneous character" of the evolutionist and determinist viewpoint, nor did it emerge as the subjectivist viewpoint itself maintains, from a revisionist "deviation" or "degeneration." Rather, on the level of theoretical consciousness, it can be seen as a recoil to the advent of the monopoly phase of capitalism which, by contradicting in reality the positivist conception of an unavoidable evolutionary passage to socialism, had precipitated into a crisis the flatly objectivistic interpretation of Marxist theory. In reading Max Adler's work one notes, much more than in Bernstein or, to mention a neo-Kantian Marxist, in Vorländer, the peculiar connection between the crisis of the Second International (which is both a crisis of a scholastic framework based on the absolute legitimacy of the historical process, and of the objectivistic-economist conception of politics which this framework supported) and the birth of the so-called "Western Marxism." The latter emerged at the same time as a critique of every deterministic concept of history and of every reformist practice, while seeking an activist-revolutionary reconstitution of the forms of subjectivity. Max Adler's attempt to find an autonomous theoretical and political way (a sort of "third way" between social democracy and Bolshevism) based on a broad and comprehensive philosophic reconstitution of Marxism, took place at this delicate point in time, characterized by the war, the October revolution and the theoretical crisis of 1923. For this whole range of questions dealing with neo-Kantian socialism, see the openly social-democratic treatment contained in N. Lesser, *Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus. Der Austromarxismus als Theorie und Praxis* (Vienna, Frankfurt and Zurich, 1968). For Max Adler, cf. pp. 513-561.

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abstractions that takes from reality its structuring moments, corresponds the de-objectified resolution of the political moment into an ethical and transcendental moment. The same split also appears in the definition of *class*: the latter splits into a "material" moment within production (the labor force), and a "spiritual" moment which, through its universality, transcends the empirical levels of the material and productive condition of the class (the universal human "will" of the proletariat, "class consciousness" as a reassembling of the *dissected members* of the human essence). Thus, the genesis of class consciousness it not *explained* in terms of the process of production and reproduction, and from within the objectivity of social relations, but is *presupposed* as a result of an irreducible autonomy that at a certain point of development, makes the qualitative jump which breaks the quantitative uniformity of the empirical world.

In the polemic concerning Grossmann's book we are confronted by a sharp contrast between two theoretical perspectives. On one side is Pannekoek's perspective, which represents the process of attaining autonomy by the will from economic and empirical conditions according to the indicated dualistic scheme (subsequently resolved by the claim of an *undifferentiated* unity of the two moments). The other side is represented by Mattick, who sees the genesis of class consciousness (and thus the passage from the "class in itself" into the "class for itself") as the *result of an objective process*, whose laws of movement are *neither resolved nor reflected in a movement of abstract consciousness or in an abstract unity of consciousness and objective conditions*, but in the articulated and differentiated context of *production relations*. Only within this dynamic can the class struggle be explained since it is none other than the effect of the contradictions inherent in these productive relations.

6.

In a letter to Mattick of June 21, 1931, Grossmann himself clarified this controversial point in his polemic against the Austro-Marxists. "Obviously," he wrote "I am far from holding that capitalism is destined to collapse 'by itself' or 'automatically,' as Hilferding and other socialists (Braunthal) claim in taking issue with my book. It can be demolished only through the class struggle of the working class. But I wanted to show that class struggle alone is not enough. The will to demolish is not enough. In the *initial phases* of capitalist development such a will cannot even arise... Obviously, as a *dialectical* Marxist, I know that both sides of the process, the objective and the subjective, are *reciprocally* influenced. In the class struggle these factors fuse. One cannot 'wait' until *first* the 'objective' conditions are there and only *then* allow the 'subjective' ones to operate. That would be an inadequate, mechanical conception which is alien to me. But *for the purposes of analysis*, I must utilize the abstract procedure of isolating particular elements in order to show the essential functions of each element. Lenin often speaks of the revolutionary situation which must be objectively given as a presupposition

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for the active and victorious intervention of the proletariat. My theory of collapse does not aim at the exclusion of this active intervention, but rather wants to show when and under what conditions such an objectively given revolutionary situation can and does arise."[32]

Here Grossmann laid the foundations for a possible connection between the critique of political economy and the theory of revolution. A fundamental and irreducible moment of this connection should have been the dialectical representation. As Roman Rosdolsky has shown in his work on the genesis of *Capital*, the distinction between "method of research" and "method of presentation" in the critique of political economy—a distinction which underlies the other, also decisive distinction between the genetic and morphological levels, the historical and the logical moment[33]—does not have purely epistemological significance, but also political and revolutionary relevance.[34] If the selection of an abstract criterion of exposition is not arbitrary (nor the result of purely methodological considerations), but is connected to the need to conceptually represent the process of *real abstraction*; and if the dialectical exposition of *Capital* describes the development of categorical norms which, in their logical structure, express the *real domination* of abstraction in capitalist society, then the critique of political economy is, *through the dialectical representation*, a penetration and at the same time a criticism of an *subject-less totality* regulated by the domination of the abstract (commodity abstract labor). Thus, the critique of political economy is, on the one hand, a penetration of categorical objectivity as a "mode of being" of a totality specified in a historically determined present and in its reified "forms of thought"[35] while on the other hand, it is an immanent critique of this "objectivity" in as much as it is the theoretical expression of a real negativity and is a shift to an alternate logical and historical process having its genesis in the framework of abstract labor.[36] It is at the same time a critique of "consciousness" and a critical theory of revolution.

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32. In H. Grossmann, *Marx, op.cit.*, p. 88.

33. Cf. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur* (Munich, 1971), pp. 41ff., as well as C. Luporini, *Marx secondo Marx, op.cit.*, pp. 84-112.

34. In addition to the already mentioned work on the genesis of *Capital*, cf. Rosdolsky's recently published collection of essays on the theory and practice of the Second International, *Studien über revolutionäre Taktik* (West Berlin, 1973). Concerning the problem of a political reading of the *Darstelling*, cf. H. Reinicke, *Ware und Dialektik* (Darmstadt-Neuwied, 1974). This book takes up and develops several of Krahl's ideas.

35. On the relationship between the commodity form (*Warenform*) and the thought form [*Denkform*), cf. A. Sohn-Rethel's controversial but stimulating considerations in his *Warenform und Denkform*, pp. 101ff., and *Geistige und körperliche Arbeit*, pp. 24 (both works published Frankfurt, 1971). The publication of Sohn-Rethel's writings, written during the 1930s in the context of the internal discussion of Critical Theory, but "discovered" only recently, perhaps constitutes the most relevant theoretical event of the last decade in West Germany. Cf. H. Reinicke, *op.cit.*, pp. 103-118, and "Ware und Dialektik—Zur Konstitution des bürgerlichen Bewusstseins bei Sohn-Rethel," *Politikon* 36 (April-May, 1971), pp. 22-33.

36. Cf. B. De Giovanni, *Hegel e il Tempo Storico della Società Borghese* (Bari, 1970), pp. 173-202.

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To the extent that they reconstruct the fundamental components of Marx's mature research (the theory of value and of money, the essence-phenomenon relation, logical time-historical time, use value-exchange value), recent studies on the genesis of the structure of *Capital* and on the epistemological *status* of Marxist theory offer the possibility of extracting from the very critique of political economy the fundamental categories of political theory, of the theory of classes and of the theory of the state. In its double character as a theory of real abstraction and as a critique of the forms of reified consciousness (understood, not subjectively, but as effective "modes of being" of individuals and classes in the historically specified totality of capitalist society), the critique of political economy constitutes the obligatory point of departure for a *scientific foundation of class consciousness* or for what today is called "the problem of constitution."[37]

Returning this complex of problems (and tasks) to the theoretical and political discussion connected to *our* historical present urgently demands the theoretically elaborated and historically relevant recognition of the problem of method within Marxism and the labor movement. This is necessary to locate those moments and those epistemological efforts will eventually contain either the posing of the problem of constitution (and of the critical connection between political economy and the revolutionary theory at its foundation), or the presuppositions for a materialist treatment of the problem.

Important beginnings in this direction can be traced to the until recently neglected works of Henryk Grossmann and Paul Mattick. Paradoxically, it is precisely the fact that their economic 'models' appear 'closed' and unitary (because, unlike "neo-Marxist" theories of capitalist development, they do not present any divisions between *production* and *markets*) that offers the possibility of basing a specific and non-generic (ethical and subjectivist) level of politics on them—despite their theoretical limits and historical conditioning.[38] The categorical re-examination of the capitalist system as a

37. Marxist theory is rigorously analyzed in the works of R. Rosdolsky, *op.cit.*; O. Morf, *Geschichte und Dialektik in der politischen Oekonomie* (Frankfurt and Vienna, 1970); and, more recently, in the work of H. Reichelt, *Zur logischen Struktur des Kapitalbegriffs bei Karl Marx* (Frankfurt and Vienna, 1970); H.-G. Backhaus, "Zur Dialektik der Wertform," in *Beiträge zur marxistischen Erkenntnistheorie*, edited by A. Schmidt (Frankfurt, 1970), pp. 128-52; and "Materialen zur Rekonstruktion der Marxschen Werttheorie," in *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie I* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 52-77. Concerning the relation between the critique of political economy and the theory of history, the dialectical *Darstellung* and the theme of class consciousness (*Konstitutionsproblematik*), the contributions of A. Schmidt are relevant. In addition to the already cited *Geschichte und Struktur*, see his "Zum Erkenntnisbegriff der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie," in *Kritik der politischen Oekonomie heute. 100 Jahre "Kapital,"* edited by W. Euchner and A. Schmidt (Frankfurt and Vienna, 1968), pp. 30-43; O. Negt, *Soziologische Phantasie und exemplarisches Lernen* (Frankfurt, 1971). But, above all, see the volume, written in collaboration with A. Kluge, *Oeffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Oeffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt, 1972). All these authors develop (often with sharp polemical points) central themes of Critical Theory.

38. Cf. N. Badaloni's perceptive article, "Il 'Meccanismo Unico' nel Tardo Capitalismo," in *Rinascita* XXX:20 (May 18, 1973), pp. 23-25. Here Badaloni takes up and clarifies several central points concerning his contributions to the discussions on Marxism in the 1960s. Cf. *Il*

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contradictory whole defined by the overall process of social reproduction and expressed on the historical and structural level as a tendency to crisis brings us back to the very current theme of the state and of its function within the mechanism of evaluation and socialization of labor. To the extent that it is a disclosure, and thus an *anticipation* rather than a "reflection" of the essential structural factors of the real historical process of capitalist society, the abstract categorical description is not self-sufficient but refers back to the dimension of class struggle.

7.

Pannekoek could accuse Grossmann of being tied to a positivist and bourgeois conception of "social necessity" because he had omitted the *critical* aspect of Grossmann's exposition. He had taken Grossmann's work as an abstract, empirical and descriptive model and thus he ended up by treating it as a manual of political economy.[39] Thus, in the same manner one could accuse Marx of economism for having described, in the four volumes of *Captial*, the development of bourgeois society as the development of categorical forms changed by economics. This type of objection does not take into account the preliminary methodological warning implicit in the subtitle "critique of political economy." At the same time, this type of objection precludes the possibility of understanding its profound *political* significance (not to be understood as flat instrumentality). Thus, Pannekoek's criticism stems from his failure to grasp the main point of the mode of presentation of the critique of political economy. "It comes to the surface here," writes Marx in *Capital*, "in a *purely economic* way—i.e., from the bourgeois point of view, within the limitations of capitalist understanding, from the standpoint of capitalist production itself—that it has its barrier, that it is relative that it is not an absolute, but only a historical mode of production corresponding to a definite limited epoch in the development of the material requirements of

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Marxismo Italiano degli Anni Sessanta e la Formazione Teorico-Politica delle Nuove Generazioni (Rome, 1972), pp. 19ff., subsequently developed in *Per il Comunismo. Questioni di Teoria* (Turin, 1972), which along with the already-mentioned works of Luporini and De Giovanni, constitutes the major recent contribution to the Italian Marxist discussions. For the critical-methodological conceptions of Mattick, see the recent collection of his essays, *Kritik der Neomarxisten* (Frankfurt, 1974).

39. The anonymous author of the article on crisis theory which came out in the *Proletarier* together with Korsch's, had accused Grossmann of not understanding Marx's method. "Marx," he wrote, "does not mean to *explain* capitalist reality through a 'procedure of approach' (*Annäherungsverfahren*): his theory is not meant as a means to reconstruct economic reality in its totality. It is meant, rather, to unveil the absurdity of the economic foundations of the system... and, furthermore, to give to the proletariat the chance to examine concretely its reality from the perspective of revolutionary transformation." Cf. "Die Grundlagen einer revolutionären Krisentheorie," reprinted in Korsch-Mattick-Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, p. 75. After having read this article, Grossmann wrote to Mattick in a letter dated May 7, 1933: "To Marx—assures the critic—it is not important to *explain* the capitalist reality (as I claim). The same critic proposes, besides, to furnish a 'theory' of crises. But what significance does the theory have unless one proposes not only to *describe* the data, but to understand it in its functional connections and thus to *explain* it?" Cf. *Marx*, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

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production."[40]

Having understood the "theory of the crash" as the self-criticism of the capitalist system at the level of "abstract description" (and thus as a return to its transitional historical character of the mode of production based on commodity exchange), Grossmann can avoid the error usually committed by many "Marxist" economists: to separate the theory of value—the cornerstone of the critique of political economy—from the materialist conception of history. The development of historical materialism into a science coincides with the understanding of the transitory nature of bourgeois society. Sismondi "foresaw" this at the level of a philosophy of history, in the "cellular form" (*Zellenform*) of the mode of production, in the form of commodity production, in the value form of commodities, and in value taking the form of capital.[41] Grossmann's "method of isolation" represents the contradictory unity of use value and exchange value *only* in its economic aspect, thus as a problem of the organic composition of capital and, finally, as an *economic tendency* toward crisis (tendential fall of the rate of profit)—a result of the contradiction inherent in the very mechanism of accumulation. In its "natural" character, the historical past of the capitalist social formation thus appears as a tendency within the economic heart of the material base, as a "natural" connection to the crisis which leads to collapse. Grossmann *deduces* the *social* tendency through which this economic tendency is realized: the contradiction between productive forces and relations of production; from

40. K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 259. Pannekoek's methodological misunderstanding is further clarified if we examine the more theoretical and political side of his critique. Challenging Grossmann's claim that the collapse is neither an alternative to nor a contradiction of the class struggle (cf. *Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz, op.cit.*, p. 602), Pannekoek accuses Grossmann of having a reductivist conception of the latter, i.e., of seeing it as a simple struggle for wage increases and for the reduction of labor time (cf. Pannekoek, *op.cit.*, p. 29). Actually, as a consequence of his line of argument, which Pannekoek ignores, Grossmann does not refer solely to the factory struggle, but to the overall dynamic of the capitalist system. He connects the class struggle, in all of its complexity, to the process of *reproduction* and not to the simple productive process, "precisely because in Marx the entire analysis of the process of reproduction leads to the class *struggle*" (Grossmann, *op.cit.*). Here Grossmann quotes a conclusive passage from a letter by Marx to Engels dated April 30, 1868, concerning the structure of the second and third volumes of *Capital*. Having shown the phenomenal character of the "independent movement" of the economy, which makes economic categories appear as if they followed an objective, autonomous and self-given process, Marx concludes that, when one relates wages and profits to the three classes (landed owners, capitalists and workers) which constitute the sources of income, the result of the entire dialectic of the forms is "the *class struggle* as an outlet in which the movement and dissolution of all the crap is worked out" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* [Moscow, 1955], pp. 207-208). To the extent that this conclusion implies the totality of the *reproductive* process, it rules out all restricted conception (economistic or syndicalist) of the class struggle. And Grossman uses it in order to demonstrate that, at a high level of capital accumulation, *the struggle for the distribution of income* "is not only a struggle for the betterment of the standards of living of the struggling classes, *but a struggle for the very existence of the capitalist mechanism*" (*op.cit.*).

41. Grossmann wrote a sizeable study on Sismondi: *Sismonde de Sismondi et ses théories économiques* (*Un nouvelle interpretation de sa pensée*) (Varsaviae, 1924). Some important considerations concerning the Swiss economist can also be found in the essay "W. Playfair, The Earliest Theorist of Capitalist Development," in *Economic History Review* XVIII (1948), pp. 65-83.

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within this critical "self-description." The latter is based on the historical materialist moment of the *self-foundation* of political economy, independent of the shift from the understanding on the level of philosophy of history to the dialectical and categorical self-understanding of the historically determined and transitional character of bourgeois society.

To the extent that it defines the *essential* contradictory character of the capitalist mode of production at the general social level, this contradiction between productive forces and relations of production can neither be relegated to the competitive capitalist phase as Panzieri and other "new left" theoreticians nor reduced to a metaphorical objectification of the capital-labor conflict as many exponents of *Linkskommunismus* maintained. Within the capitalist system, it is impossible to suppress the "natural character" of the process or to control it through planning, in that it is impossible to emerge from "pre-history" while remaining within the limits of commodity production. And, if the autonomous moment of the representation is not merely an empirical abstraction but expresses the *real* process whereby the domination of the abstract becomes autonomous in bourgeois society, then the constitution of the proletariat as a "class for itself" cannot be originally given in the "relations of production" as the effect of a manichean split between capital and "workers' autonomy," but is rather the result of a long historical process of emancipation from within the *real* domination of *abstract* labor, in philosophical terms: the process whereby the proletariat becomes subject, is the result of a process without a subject. Thus, this process has produced a historical present characterized and specified by growing mass participation (protagonisms). But without the "natural character" of capitalism this participation would be a mere idealist category i.e., practically inconceivable in the past (its genesis) as well as in the present (its realization). Despotic socialization, in its *contradictory unity*, fulfills rather than suppresses the fundamental historical contradiction between productive forces and relations of production (which is not limited to the competitive phase but is inherent in the dichotomous structure of the system's "cellular form:" *commodities*). State intervention in the economy functions as a "plan" only in the technocratic ideology of late capitalism. In reality, since it is itself a counter-tendency, this intervention merely mediates other counter-tendencies to the tendential fall of the rate of profit. The *formally* unifying character of despotic socialization leads to ideologizing in the category of the "plan" the real function of the state as the regulator of the overall process of reproduction. Thus, it prevents an understanding of the unity and contradiction of the productive forces and of the relations of production within the new configuration which this process assumes in modern organized capitalism.

8.

Paradoxically, the weak point of Panzieri's argument (which, apart from the obvious historical differences, turns out to be strikingly similar to

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Korsch's) lies in its most vital political contribution: the call for an anti-dogmatic renewal of the Marxist discourse based on the translation of the categories pertaining to the critique of political economy into those of revolutionary theory. Although starting from the Marxian connection between the theory of capitalist development and the theory of social revolution which Korsch had violently criticized,[42] Panzieri finds himself in the company of the Korschian theoretical left in misinterpreting the significance and the function of the representation. If in Korsch the categorical representation is reduced to a mere reflection and the theory of the crisis to an objectifying allegory of real class conflicts, in Panzieri the development of the presentation from the first to the third volume of *Capital* is directly associated with the real historical development of capital from the competitive to the monopolistic phase. In order to validate his reading of the three volumes of *Capital* as a description of the "historical process of the growing cohesion of the system"[43] which would have led, beyond Marx's own expectations, to the complete realization of the law of value as the "law of the plan," Panzieri quotes an important passage from the third volume: "In our description of production relations, they are converted into entities and rendered independent in relation to the agents of production," writes Marx at the end of his chapter on the trinitary formula, "we leave aside the manner in which the interrelations, due to the world market, its conjunctures, movements of market-prices, periods of credit, industrial and commercial cycles, alterations of prosperity and crisis, appear to them as overwhelming natural laws that irresistibly enforce their will over them, and confront them as blind necessity. We leave this aside because the actual movement of competition belongs *beyond our scope* and we need present *only* the inner organization of the capitalist mode of production, in its ideal average as it were."[44]

But the meaning of this passage goes in precisely the opposite direction from that supposed by Panzieri: here we are not dealing—even 'abstractly'—with reproducing the phases of a real historical movement, but with abstracting from it, as a complex of empirical phenomena, in order to describe the capitalist mode of production in its essential moments. The fact that the objectification of capital in the trinitary formula "appears. . . only at the highest level of capitalist development characterized by interest-producing capital"[45] does not mean that the trinitary formula reflects or captures the real historical complexity of this level of development. Rather, in the general framework of the Marxist dialectical representation, the trinitary formula represents the synthesis of the forms of "necessary appearance" deduced from the abstract totality of the concept of capital.[46] The relation

42. Cf. in this regard P. Mattick, "Marxismus und die Unzulänglichkeiten der Arbeiterbewegung," in *Ueber Karl Korsch, op.cit.*, p. 195, where Korsch's refusal to connect the theory of social revolution with that of capitalist development is sharply criticized.
43. R. Panzieri, "Plusvalore e Pianificazione," *op.cit.*, p. 283.
44. K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 831. Italics added.
45. R. Panzieri, *op.cit.*, p. 282.
46. Cf. H. Reichelt, *op.cit.*, pp. 243ff.

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between the essence and phenomenon obtaining between the general concept of capital and "independently given capitals"—competition—does not refer to the historical and genetic, but rather to the logical and cognitive level.[47] If, on the one hand, the categorical structure cannot be flattened out as a reflection of the real movement, on the other hand, the logical and structural domination of a form of the process defines, but does not resolve or suppress, the variety and complexity of an historical phase. The political function of the method of presentation is not in mechanically superimposing itself on the method of research, but in providing the foundation and setting for the latter. The dimension of political tactics has a meaning and a place only within this difference, in the same way that, on the "cognitive level," science has a meaning and a place in the hiatus existing between phenomenon and essence: "Every science would be superfluous if the essence of things and their phenomenal form coincided."[48]

9.

In drawing some provisional conclusions, it would be appropriate to deal briefly with the *status* of the theory of the crisis in relation to the theme of "constitution." Grossmann's and Mattick's theories, whose importance we have emphasized, are not without defects and ideological deformations resulting from the historical circumstances within which they developed. Thus, in Grossmann, despite repeated theoretical warnings, the genesis of proletarian class consciousness is directly and exclusively connected with crisis periods. Similarly, Mattick sharply separates revolutionary periods defined by economic crises from non-revolutionary periods defined by productive expansion and the consequent prevalence of reformist lines within the labor movement.[49] These claims undoubtedly run the risk of an objectivist and mechanical reduction of the problem of constitution. Yet, this direct linking of periods of crisis with the genesis of class consciousness cannot be regarded as peculiar and limited to Grossmann and Mattick as theoreticians of the collapse. The same "catastrophic" interdependence can be found in Lukács, who was the first to pose the problem of constitution in the light of *Capital*: "The proletariat is then at one and the same time the product of the permanent crisis in capitalism and the instrument of those tendencies driving capitalism toward crisis... By recognizing its situation it acts. By combating capitalism it discovers its own mission in society. But the class consciousness of the proletariat, the truth of the process 'as subject' is itself far from stable and constant; it does not advance according to mechanical laws. It is the consciousness of the dialectical process itself: it is likewise a dialectical

47. Cf. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte und Struktur, op.cit.*, pp. 41ff.

48. K. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 273. For all of these problems, cf. C. Luporini, *Marx secondo Marx, op.cit.*, pp. 99-101.

49. Cf. *Marx and Keynes, The Limits of the Mixed Economy* (Boston, 1969), and "Marxismus und die Unzulänglichkeiten der Arbeiterbewegung," *op.cit.*, pp. 192ff. For a look at Mattick's theoretical-political positions considered as a whole, see the French anthology of his work edited by R. Paris, *Intégration capitaliste et rupture ouvrière* (Paris, 1972).

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concept. For the active and practical side of class consciousness, its true essence, can only become visible in its authentic form when the historical process imperiously requires it to come into force, i.e., when an acute crisis of the economy drives it to action."[50]

Thus, even in their shortcomings, the works of Grossmann and Mattick belong with the most advanced level of discussion during the 1920s and 1930s. Although Mattick has only posed the problem of the state in its present form of capitalist organization, the so-called mixed economy, its richness can be measured *ex negativo* by comparing it with some of Korsch's essays on the state written during his American exile and published in *Living Marxism* (edited by Mattick himself).[51] Here Korsch develops some ideas on the state by developing and elaborating ideas from some of his other works. The importance of these articles lies in the fact that they demonstrate the overriding importance of the level of representation for the theme of the state. In his "Marxism and the Present Task of the Proletarian Class Struggle,"[52] Korsch counterposes Marx as the "theoretician of the proletariat" to Marx as the "radical-bourgeois publicist" (referring to Marx's contributions in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and in the *New York Daily Tribune*) and traces this dualism to the Jacobin model of revolution adopted by the founders of scientific socialism. Korsch can put forth this scheme because he hypostatizes to the level of a complete and permanent theory the ideas on the state expressed by Marx and Engels in the *Vormärz*, without seeing the possibility of reconsidering the problem on the basis of their later critique of political economy. Having established a relation of simple reversal between civil society and the state, with an explicit anti-state bias,[53] Korsch runs into what he considers the original contradiction of Marxism: since, *as theory*, it is the *reflection* of a *real* process, it cannot also be a theory of proletarian and communist revolution (since the latter has not yet occurred). Thus, up to now Marxism has existed as the reflection of another revolution, the capitalist and bourgeois revolution. Unable to grasp the practical and political function of the dialectical mode of exposition as distinct from the "method of research," Korsch posits a relation of mere "reflection" or simple "correspondence" between the level of categorical abstractions and the level of empirical facts.

Hence, the essential simplicity with which he sees that specific historical

50. G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 40.

51. *Living Marxism*, which was first known as *International Council Correspondence* and then as *New Essays* [all the issues of these journals have recently been reprinted by Greenwood Publishing Company (Westport, Conn., 1971)], published political, economic and social theories of some of the better-known exponents of *Linkskommunismus* during the 1930s and 1940s. Besides Mattick and Korsch (both in emigration in the United States), Anton Pannekoek and Otto Rühle also wrote for it and articles were periodically translated from *Rätekorrespondenz* of Amsterdam in it. For an excellent account of this, see Gabriella M. Bonacchi, "Teoria Marxista e Crisi: I 'Comunisti dei Consigli' tra New Deal e Fascismo," in *Problemi del Socialismo* XVII:25-26 (1974).

52. In *Living Marxism* IV:4 (August, 1938); cf. in particular pp. 118-119.

53. Cf. "Economics and Politics in Revolutionary Spain," *Living Marxism* IV (May 3, 1938), and "Collectivisation in Spain," *ibid.*, IV (April 6, 1939).

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form of *real abstraction* represented by the state. The latter is not considered in the light of the overall structure of the abstract in the conception of the mature Marx, but in terms of the immediate counterposition of state and civil society paralleling that between speculation and reality.[54] Thus, in attempting to diachronically dilute the dialectical categories of Marxism in order to re-adapt them pragmatically to the needs of a "practical theory of proletarian revolution," Korsch flattens out the dialectical problems of historical constitution (which marks the indirect phases of the passage from factory struggles to overall social struggle; from economic to political struggles), and turns them into positivist problems of empirical "specification." The class struggle is thus simplified in a series of empirically grounded actions set loose in different spatial-temporal locations, the multiplicitity of which is never connected with the morphological context of the crisis: the unifying moment of the historical present.

The tragically impotent outcome of Korsch's thought shows, therefore, how the separation of the theory of social revolution—the theory of classes and of the state—from the critique of political economy and its resulting theory of the crisis paradoxically produces a loss of *specificity* in precisely that political dimension which initially was to be privileged.[55] What remains out of consideration is mainly the function of the state in the mature Marxian conception: this is a problem that theory must finally deal with.

The state emerges from the representation of the overall process of social reproduction as the supreme expression of the reality of the abstraction and of its effective complex domination over society. As the last peak of the logical and historical process of socialization of capital, and thus of the real universalization of the domination of the abstract, the state emerges as background to the critique of political economy; a regulating instance and, at the same time, a generalized expression of the crisis.

54. Within this perspective, the parallel drawn in *Marxism and Philosophy* between the abolition of philosophy and the abolition of the state is to be seen as a theoretical and political failure related to a rather limited reading of Marx's early philosophical works. On this point cf. B.D. Giovanni, "Marx e lo Stato," *Democrazia e Diritto* 3 (1973), p. 49.

55. The flip side of Korsch's 'critical' program is his dogmatic conception of the critique of political economy. The latter is considered conclusive once and for all with the analysis of the essence of the mode of capitalist production developed by Marx in *Capital*; one need only sum pu the fundamental concepts from time to time. Marxist theory is constantly rediscovered and updated, however, as the theory of the class struggle. Separated from the structural analysis of capitalist development and from the consequent critical reflexion on the logical apparatus of Marxist categories in relation to the changed 'morphology' of the mode of production, the theory of revolution ends up wavering impotently between the extreme poles of dogmatism and empiricism. In this respect, see Oskar Negt, "Theory, Empiricism and Class Struggle," in this issue of *Telos*. The importance and originality of *Marx and Keynes* (especially if compared to the model of Baran and Sweezy, which has conditioned international discussion for many years) lies, on the contrary, in the fact that it makes possible a unitary theoretical and political discourse grounded in a comprehensive economic analysis connecting production with markets, distribution, reproduction and the state—all on the basis of the Marxist theory of value.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

Hegel, Lukács and Korsch: On the Emancipatory Significance of the Dialectic in Critical Marxism*

by Furio Cerutti

"Materialist dialectic is a revolutionary dialectic."[1]

"The primacy of the category of totality is the bearer of the principle of revolution in science."[2]

It must be emphasized that Lukács does not mean the category of totality either in an objectivistic sense, as "plenitude,"[3] or in a functionalist sense, which would result from its reduction to interaction.[4] In connection with the critique of modern rationalism's claim to totality, especially in Kant,[5] he shows that, on the contrary, the logic of the totality is possible only if, as in Hegel, it is grounded on the "qualitative material nature of their content, in matter in the logical and philosophical sense of the word."[6] In order for the materialist dialectic to be a logic of history able to deal with the "uninterrupted outpouring of what is qualitatively new,"[7] it must come about as a dialectic of subject and object: only the subject's qualitative dimension removes from the becoming of concrete contents the character of irrationality with which it is still tarnished in the abstractly calculating thought of rationalism—as is best expressed by rationalism's inability to solve the problem of crises.[8] Lukács' grounding of the materialist dialectic emphasizes two fundamental aspects. In the first place, it stresses the dialectic of subject and object as the constitutive nexus of history which makes the logic of history contingent,[9] because the subjective is the dimension of human needs and interests. In the second place, this dialectic shows how Lukács materialistically appropriates the Hegelian program of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, i.e., to conceive

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1. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London, 1968), p. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 198. Livingstone renders as "plenitude" what in the original is "*extensiv-inhaltliche Fülle.*"
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-15. Cf. also note 59 on p. 216.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101; pp. 105-106; pp. 243-244.
9. Georg Lukács, "Moses Hess and the Problem of the Idealist Dialectic (1926)," *Telos* 10 (Winter, 1971), pp. 3-34.

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the true not only as "substance, but also as subject."[10] In this sense, *History and Class Consciousness* appears as the reconstruction of the historical subject's formative process: the revolutionary proletariat, for whom class truth—historical materialism—appears as the self-knowledge of capitalist society.[11]

From the *Phenomenology of Spirit,* Lukács derives not only his program for the philosophy of history, but also his methodological tools—especially the dialectical couples immediacy-mediation and in itself-for itself. The category of mediation unhinges the world of facts and its equivocations as "sense certainty" of the immediately given (i.e., of the anarchic and lacerated world of capitalist production), and as the reproduction of the reified world, fixed "to the second power" by the philosophy of reflection.[12] Mediation means primarily that "things" become historical processes once again. The present appears now as something that has become (*ein Gewordenes*) through the historical struggle of conflicting subjects (classes), and also—if it is not absolutized in a reactionary manner, as in Hegel—as a becoming (*ein Werdendes*) aimed toward the future.[13]

To conceive the present dialectically is central for the Lukácsian theory of history precisely because it provides the interconnections of the concept of subject with that of praxis. "It is this critical orientation toward the immediacy of the present which relates it to human activity: we find the direction and scope of practical-critical activity or of revolutionary practice precisely in these moments striving to surpass themselves."[14] The possibility of surpassing the immediacy of the present through practical-critical activity is articulated by Lukács along the lines of the Hegelian critique of the *Sollen* of petty-bourgeois revolutionary thought from Kant and Fichte to Feuerbach and Hess: the revolutionary knowledge of the present as mediation toward a future *to be made* is not possible for the abstract ethical subject, but only for a subject dealing with history as the history of its own formation.[15] Two dimensions are therefore essential for the revolutionary subject: the dimension of totality (which mediates and dissolves the crystallized form that alienated praxis has assumed in natural social laws peculiar to the capitalist mode of reproduction of social wealth); and the historical one which, in any case, coincides with the first: the rise of the proletariat as a class for itself appears

10. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, op.cit.,* p. 142.
11. *Ibid.,* pp. 229-231.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 110. Since vulgar bourgeois economics and vulgar Marxism do not deal with the concrete totality, but with "connections of reflection," their categories are ideologically a-historical. But even Hegel falls into this a-historical ideology when, unable to recognize the real historical subject, he must find recourse to the conceptual mythology of the *Volksgeist.* To that extent, according to Lukács, the Marxist critique of Hegel is a continuation of the Hegelian polemic against the philosophy of reflection. Cf. *History and Class Consciousness,* pp. 9-10 and p. 17. Yet, it is not a trivial "continuation" of Hegelian themes on the historical and philosophical level by Marx. The category of "connection of reflection" and its a-historicity have their foundation in the value-relation, more specifically in the relation of relative and equivalent forms, i.e., they are immanent in the form of social synthesis typical of a society of producers of commodities. In addition to the well-known passage from the 1857 "Introduction" cited by Lukács, cf. the passages from the first chapter of the first edition of the first volume of *Capital,* now in Marx-Engels, *Studienausgabe,* Vol. II, "Politische Oekonomie," edited by I. Fetscher (Frankfurt, 1966), pp. 229-231.
13. *History and Class Consciousness, op.cit.,* p. 157.
14. "Moses Hess...," *op.cit.,* p. 28.
15. *History and Class Consciousness, op.cit.,* p. 159: "The historical knowledge of the proletariat begins with knowledge of the present, with the self-knowledge of its own social situation and with the elucidation of its necessity (i.e., its genesis)."

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as a collective process of apprehension through self-reflection.[16] Thus, the Hegelian project of representing theory as the self-knowledge of reality[17] finds its materialist truth in the Marxist doctrine of the category, following the "Introduction" (1857) to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. If the genesis of the determinations of thought and the history of real contents are recognized as moments of the same process, materialistically it must first of all be emphasized that mediations in thought have their correlates in the already mediated empirical existence of objects; it is only "the manifestation of their authentic objective structure."[18] That the real mediated being of objects appears to consciousness as immediacy is an appearance (*Schein*): to dissolve this appearance is the project that Lukács undertakes along the Hegelian lines of the dialectic of essence and appearance and of "immediate knowledge." On the one hand, it is a question of a necessary appearance because immediacy is the necessary product of estrangement,[19] while on the other hand, it is precisely (false) consciousness that becomes the support of this immediacy.

"There is no immediate knowledge. Immediate knowledge is where we have no *consciousness* of mediation; but it is mediated for all that."[20]

Far from standing in a mere relation of causal dependence to the capitalist reality of exploitation and reification, false consciousness is rather the grounding nexus of the apparent immediacy and eternity of the capitalist "laws of nature." To remove this appearance in a mediated totality means, therefore, that "those immanent meanings that necessarily inhere in the objects of bourgeois society but which are absent from the immediate manifestations of those objects as well as from their mental reflection in bourgeois thought now become *objectively effective* and can therefore enter the consciousness of the proletariat."[21]

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16. This is the point of departure for Michael Vester's historical and sociological reconstruction in his *Die Entstehung des Proletariats als Lernprozess* (Frankfurt, 1970).

17. *History and Class Consciousness, op.cit.*, p. 16.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 162. In this passage the "orthodox" Lukács of the last decades thinks of seeing one of the few clues, dispersed throughout *History and Class Consciousness*, that "points forward to a genuine Marxist ontology of existence in society" (from the "Preface to the New Edition (1967)," p. xxvi). But the epistemological reduction of Marxism, crystallized in an ontology or in a theory of reflection, is a step backward with respect to what Marx had done: the overcoming of realism and of conceptual nominalism in the dialectic of abstract and concrete.

19. Cf. "Moses Hess . . .," *op.cit.* This is not the place to examine the differentiation and the interaction, within Lukács' account, of the logic of being and essence with respect to the original Hegelian version. Yet, I cannot share Biagio Di Giovanni's criticism (in his *Hegel e il Tempo Storico della Società Borghese* [Bari, 1970], pp. 86-90) of Lukacs' presumed anthropologism—a criticism which does not take into account the clarifications provided in the Hess essay, nor the meaning of "the determination of reflection" in the reified movement of value (see note 12). At any rate, in his important work, Di Giovanni warns of a real difficulty in Lukács' thought: the relation between the structuration and the solidification of the historical process and the explosion of the qualitative dimension.

20. This passage from Hegel's *Philosophy of Religion* is quoted by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* on p. 218, note 20. Lukács seems to want to eliminate the context (absolute knowledge) in which the Hegelian philosophy of identity locates immediate knowledge when he adds that he has quoted Hegel only in relation to the "methodological aspect of this problem."

21. If one grasps this point, it becomes clear how little and falsely materialist is the separation of the critique of ideology from the critical analysis of the relations of production. The latter cannot be separated from the former as a derivation or as an application of Marxism (whose kernel is subsequently located in that *ens realissimum* which is the economic base). This is a deformation of Marxism which, as Korsch saw, triumphed in the so-called Marxism of the Second International. It is not altogether lacking even today, among other things, in the form of an underemphasis of struggle for the growth and the organization of class consciousness with

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The Hegelian elements in *History and Class Consciousness*—theory as self-knowledge of reality, the dialectic of immediacy and mediation, the constitutive function of consciousness in the becoming-for-itself of the class as a subject—take on a concrete aspect when Lukács indicates their foundation in the analysis of the fetishistic character of commodities.[22] The total reification of the worker who has to sell his labor power as a commodity through the exchange of equivalents in the capitalist market brings about the possibility of attaining consciousness.[23] But this "*self-consciousness of the commodity*...the self-knowledge, the self-revelation of the capitalist society founded upon the production and exchange of commodities,"[24] is not a purely cognitive but a practical and destructive consciousness. "*That is to say, this knowledge brings about an objective structural change in the object of knowledge.*" If, on the one hand, the knowledge of the commodity labor power becomes possible through capitalist reification, on the other hand, the practical and destructive character of this self-knowledge is based on the circumstance that the qualitative substance of the worker is reactivated in it.

"The special objective character of labour as a commodity, its 'use-value' (i.e., its ability to yield surplus produce) which like every use-value is submerged without a trace in the quantitative exchange categories of capitalism, now awakens and becomes *social reality*. The special nature of labour as a commodity which in the absence of this consciousness acts as an unacknowledged driving wheel in the economic process now objectifies itself by means of this consciousness."[25] This is how Lukács, in the heart of the Marxist critique of economics, determines the function of consciousness in the constitution of the object.[26] The thing-like and unconscious character of the worker, which in its immediacy as a "state of nature" is at the same time the expression and condition of exploitation, can only be supressed if the worker mediates himself as well as all of society in his (class) consciousness.

To the extent that the worker becomes conscious of being the actual motor of the capitalist productive process—and not only as a simple seller of the commodity labor power, but in his natural and human existence as a carrier of the use-value labor power—to this extent, the (qualitative) dimension of the subject, suffocated in a capitalist society organized for the production of exchange-values, is reopened and reestablished. Now, in *History and Class Consciousness*, the sphere of use-value is the

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respect to "field-struggles" for power positions. The passage cited in the text appears on p. 163 of *History and Class Consciousness*, emphasis added.

22. It could be said, writes Lukács, "that the chapter dealing with the fetish character of the commodity contains within itself the whole of historical materialism and the whole self-knowledge of the proletariat seen as the knowledge of capitalist society." *Ibid.*, p. 170.

23. This possibility is based on the fact that the total becoming-object of the worker as a seller of the commodity labor-power paradoxically retains his human quality. In fact, the latter, hit by every intensification of the relation of exploitation (the problem of labor-time) breaks and overcomes the abstract-quantitative immediacy of the exchange of equivalents. Cf. *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 165-168. It is remarkable that the rupture of subjectivity and objectivity (as the condition of the possibility of proletarian class consciousness) fulfills a function similar to that attributed to it by Hegel in the origins of "the need for philosophy." Cf. *Differenz des fichteschen und schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1962), p. 13.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 168.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

26. "The constitution of the object" must not be idealistically identified with its production; the term merely indicates the place of consciousness for the "determination of forms" (in the usage of *Capital*) of the worker in his special character.

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same as that of needs and their satisfaction,[27] which constitutes the real "material substratum" of history. While this sphere normally has a life outside of the capitalist economy and its ideological reproduction, it explosively re-emerges in periods of crisis from the quantifying abstractions of the society of exchange as an unknown and intangible factor.[28] While investigating the "phenomenon of reification," Lukács has analyzed the dismemberment and the oppression of the human-qualitative dimension, and has shown that the dissociation of the labor process and of its products parallels that of the subject.[29] What corresponds to this is the transcendental formalization of the subject in rationalist thought. More specifically, in Kant it corresponds to the splitting into phenomenon and noumenon[30] which has, as a direct consequence, the dissociation of praxis in a dualism of ethics and technique.

Thus, in *History and Class Consciousness* the destruction and reconstruction of the real historical subject (i.e., the subject in its materiality) is dealt with in the critique of political economy, and, more specifically, in the dialectic of the value form as the nucleus of the critique of ideology. The framework of this theory is given by the program of the *Phenomenology* turned in a materialist direction. In its mediatory function, consciousness refers precisely to this material subjective dimension, or better yet, it reintegrates it at the center of the abstractions of capitalist exchange. It is here that the categories "subject" and "consciousness" play an emancipatory role, and this is the materialist legitimation of the Hegelian concepts taken over by *History and Class Consciousness*.[31] It is in the light of this formulation of the concept of subject that Lukács resumes the Marxist critique of Hegel: Marx did not correct Hegel in the idealism-materialism question as much as he recognized classes as historical subjects, rather than the "spirit of the people," or great individuals.[32] This has a subsequent effect upon Lukács' concept of the totality: the totality is neither undifferentiated, as

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27. *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 103-107. Even if Lukács does not explicitly complete this theory, he clearly connects "the immediate—qualitative and material—character of things as things" (*ibid.*, p. 92) with their coming about within the horizon of human praxis as use-values destined for "real consumption" (p. 106). Praxis in a non-reified form is aimed precisely "towards what is qualitatively unique, towards the content and the material substratum of the object concerned" (p. 126). For the problem of the "indirectly materialist doctrine of the thing," cf. Hans-Jürgen Krahl, "Zur Wesenlogik der Marxschen Warenanalyse," now in his *Konstitution und Klassenkampf, op.cit.*, pp. 37-38 and pp. 50-51. The difficulty is in understanding the destructive emergence of the qualitative dimension (cf. note 23) of the so-called immediate needs, not in terms of a mere contraposition of nature (human, but not just that: cf. the 13th chapter of the first book of *Capital*) to its capitalist exploitation: what would result would be a badly humanistic conception of revolution outside of the historical determinations of its possibility. Actually, it is only the maximum socialization of nature carried out by capitalism that makes possible a different, non-destructive appropriation, by departing from determinate forms, conforming to it, which capital has imposed—in actually subsuming labor—on things, to their natural use-form, to the very human needs: *immediate* needs, as rebellion against the exploitation of labor-power as a "natural force" in the production of relative surplus-value, yet *determinate* needs, typical of the levels reached by social wealth.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

31. Ernst Bloch pointed out that in Lukács the concept of becoming is "no longer Hegel's pan-logistic process, whose becoming deals only with itself without requiring a continuous and growing recourse to the subject" but, rather, is " 'our' real becoming." Cf. "Aktualität und Utopie. Zu Lukács' Philosophie des Marxismus," in *Der Neue Merkur*, VII:1 (1923-1924), p. 476.

32. *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 28-29.

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in Hegel, nor purely mediated with itself. Rather, the categories of the totality are ordered, as structuralists would say, according to an overdetermining principle. Priority is given to those categories that show a higher degree of retranslatability in their reified form into concrete human relations understood as processes.[33] Far from constituting an alternative to the predominance of economic categories—as Lukács himself seems to believe[34]—the method of the totality is completely determined by the critique of fetishism.

The emancipatory function of consciousness is also evident where it is raised to the level of an immanent moment of dialectical and historical necessity.[35] Since consciousness is activated by the contradiction between the worker's being as an object in capitalist production and his human quality expressed in its special character as use-value, by transforming the thing-like form of his object, the worker's self-consciousness goes beyond the pure necessity of the contradiction and makes it dialectical and conscious. Thus, as a dialectic of the conscious subject, it grounds praxis as the historically efficient results of historical development, while at the same time free from any natural laws of "pre-history." The role of the "subject" and of "consciousness," which constitutes the class struggle within the same economic basis, is Lukács' most substantial argument against every objectivistic theory of revolution which opportunistically denies the proletariat's autonomous revolutionary praxis through economic arguments and, consequently, which would degrade the question of organization to the level of a purely technical problem. The revolutionary process is now posed as a process of (re)construction of the conscious subject—a process in which the revolutionary class becomes a class-for-itself. In it, social relations appear as what they are: historical conflicts of class interests which are formed within the *medium* of violence, and avoid the fetishistic appearance of the natural laws of economics as well as that of juridical categories.[36]

But in the systematic development of the theory of class consciousness in *History and Class Consciousness*, the construction of ascribed class consciousness (*zugerechnetes Klassenbewusstsein*) is later superimposed over the real history of class struggles, almost as an Hegelian "world spirit" covering this original function of consciousness, materialistically grounded in the critique of political economy.[37] But what bad Hegelianism there is in *History and Class Consciousness*—e.g., that "the absolute dialectic of class consciousness a priori guarantees the course of history"[38]—it comes from places other than Lukács' Hegelianism: ascribed class consciousness comes about

33. *Ibid.*, p. 183. Cf. also the passage on p. 159 where Lukács quotes the famous passage concerning the succession of categories from the "Introduction" of 1857.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 177-178.

36. On the problem of violence in relation to economics and law, see *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 178 and pp. 239ff.

37. The theory of ascribed consciousness, developed primarily in the essays on "Class Consciousness" and "Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organization," still bears strong traces of the transcendental philosophy of history as a philosophy of forms upon which it is interwoven in *The Theory of the Novel*. In its systematic pretense, it falls prey to the Marxian verdict pronounced on Hegel's philosophy of history: "*Hegel's* conception of history assumes an *Abstract* or *Absolute Spirit* which develops in such a way that mankind is a mere *mass* bearing it with a varying degree of consciousness or unconsciousness. Within *empiric*, exoteric history he therefore has a *speculative*, esoteric history develop." Cf. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Critique* (Moscow, 1956), p. 115.

38. Jürgen Habermas, *Theorie und Praxis* (Neuwied, 1963), p. 322.

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through construction of ideal types in which the category of "ascription" (*Zurechnung*) and "objective possibility" (at least the first one clearly originates in Weber's "*Verstehen* sociology") are extended beyond their pure methodological function and hypostasized as a scheme of real historical development. Of course, the theory of ascribed class consciousness contains so many contradictions and ambiguities that it cannot withstand an immanent critique. Yet, that does not excuse us from carrying out a critique of ideology to explain its genesis in terms of the real historical problems that Lukács had to face. From this viewpoint, in terms of the philosophy of history, the systematic theory of ascribed class consciousness appears as a guarantee of the actuality and necessity of world revolution which at that time was being projected onto an ever more distant horizon (the stabilization of capitalism after the October revolution, the defeat of the communist movements in Central and Western Europe, NEP and the growing bureaucratization in Russia). In attempting to save the revolutionary strategy and its objectives from the "ideological crisis of the proletariat," Lukács later also introduces the philosophical assumption and transfiguration of a Leninist type of the centralized party, which in relation to individual proletarians is not unlike the Hegelian disappearance of empirical individuals in the universal.[39]

At any rate, if the absolutization of ascribed class consciousness and of its agent, the party with centralized discipline, renders problematic Lukács' theory of organization, it need not lead to overlooking the emancipatory impulses in the theory, which are effectively displayed when the problems and principles of communist organization are unfolded on a dialectical level. First of all, there is the definition of organization as "the form of mediation between theory and practice."[40] This "can only be developed organically"[41] within a theory of the actuality of the revolution, and with the concept of discipline as the unity of freedom and solidarity,[42] which is substantially different from the juridical reification of a "system of rights and duties."[43] Here, organization is to be understood as the form in which the subjects, in the process of acquiring consciousness, detach themselves from capitalist reification in a critical-active manner[44] and join in class solidarity. This concept of organization and freedom is related to the elaboration of the "active side" by German Idealism.[45] Yet, here too the philosophical dialectic of subject and object goes through the critique of political economy. Within the context of a materialist dialectic of reification and emancipation, Lukács returns to Rosa Luxemburg's positions in the debate on organization, and gives them a systematic foundation and political development. The concept of the International as the "unification of the proletariat through actions" according to the principles which become concrete through "tactical unitary aggregations," rather than through proclamations by a central organ[46] emerge from the recognition of the dialectical and

39. *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 317-318. It is not superfluous here to clarify that the above applies only to Lukács' "speculative" systematization of Leninism in *History and Class Consciousness* (already in his 1924 book on Lenin the argument is not altogether the same).
40. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 337: "Freedom—as the classical German philosophers realized—is something practical, it is an activity." Cf. also p. 340, notes 15 and 17.
46. Cf. Lukács, "Organizationsfrage der dritten Internationale," in *Kommunismus*, Vol. I, No. 8-9, p. 249.

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processual character of the communist organization.[47] This example, one of many which could be cited, should indicate how the dialectical penetration of organizational problems, i.e., the theoretical expression of the early Lukács' anti-bureaucratic and anti-institutional thought, saves his theory of revolution from degenerating to the level of a legitimating science of power, in spite of any "messianic" Leninism.[48]

In Korsch also the priority given to the elaboration of the dialectical content of historical materialism has two critical functions. On the one hand, it opposes the loss of substance in the revisionist Marxism of the Second International.[49] On the other, it resists the epistemological and dualistic metaphysical reduction of historical materialism carried out by Lenin and by Soviet Marxism.[50] As in his 1924 polemic with Thalheimer, Korsch moves in this second direction when he counterposes the unity of the dialectic of knowledge (as theory of society) and the praxis of the revolutionary subject to the theory of reflection.[51] This allows him to correlate the theoretical polemic against Soviet orthodoxy with a critique of its social foundations located in the party dictatorship over the class.[52]

Thus, the critical function of the materialist dialectic becomes concretized in the program of applying it to historical materialism itself.[53] Korsch provides an historical and materialist interpretation of the Hegelian proposition that philosophy is its time expressed in thought so to free the development of Marxism from mystifications resulting when it is approached in terms of the history of ideas or the history of dogmas: as if it dealt with the falsifications and restoration of the authentic doctrine.[54] Thus, what correlates theories and ideologies is understood in terms of their genesis within the historical phases of the class struggle. To the extent that science becomes critical,[55] it becomes class science, as it was originally for Marx and Engels. The *disiecta membra* of Marxism and the very process of their separation—particularly the isolation of the problems of philosophy and of the state—can again be unified, thanks precisely to their practical roots. This program, however, is developed by Korsch in a way that is not free of interpretive schemes polluted by a non-dialectical constructivism. The "correspondence" of spiritual and economic social structures (the

47. *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 317.

48. Lukács' anti-bureaucratic position was developed in the factional struggle, within the Hungarian Communist Party, against the Bela Kun group. Cf. his "The Politics of Illusion—Yet Again," in Georg Lukács, *Political Writings 1919-1929*, trans. Michael McColgan (London, 1972), pp. 117-123. For the concept of a legitimating science as referred to Soviet Marxism, see Oskar Negt's introduction to A. Deborin and N. Bukharin, *Kontroversen über dialektischen und mechanistischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt, 1969).

49. Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, trans. Fred Halliday (London, 1970), pp. 109-111.

50. Karl Korsch, *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung. Ein Auseinandersetzung mit Karl Kautsky* (Leipzig, 1929).

51. Referring to Thalheimer's effort to cleanse Marxism of the "remnants of the Hegelian dialectic," Korsch writes: "Marx's materialist and dialectical method, which in its essence consists in concretely conceiving the proletarian revolution, is transformed in him in a purely passive and ideological 'mirroring' of single historical facts, different in time and place." Cf. Karl Korsch, "Lenin und die Komintern," in *Die Internationale*, VII:10-11 (June, 1924), p. 326.

52. *Marxism and Philosophy*, pp. 125-126.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93 and p. 51.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 60.

55. Karl Korsch, "Kernpunkte der materialistischen Geschichtsauffassung," in the German original of *Marxismus und Philosophie*. The English translation of Korsch's book does not include this essay.

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first is very often indicated as an "expression" of the second), and the elevation of the super-structure upon the economic base, are part of these kinds of schemes.[56] In another passage, Marxism and German Idealism and the proletarian and bourgeois revolutions, are inserted into a quadrangular relationship in which all of the former moments interact with each other: here the tendency towards a mere subsumption or attribution of theories and ideologies to social classes comes into play. This same distinction between theory and ideology is simplified in the sense that the first corresponds to the stage of social development which is its basis,[57] while the second (the vulgar Marxism of the Second International) exists in an inadequate and completely illusory relation to its own practice.[58]

Because of this tendency, in Korsch the reconstruction of the development of Marxism does not seem to take into account the anticipatory content of theory which occurs thanks to scientific abstraction, and which is the main repository of the critical and emancipatory potential. In this way, the one-sidedness of the theory is inadequately appreciated, as if its class character consisted only in its link with the political-organizational conditions of its period of formation.[59] Korsch himself is aware of this danger, as can be seen in his critique of Thalheimer's reductive interpretation of the Marxist conception of concrete truth.[60] It can also be seen when, referring to a text by Engels,[61] he repeatedly emphasizes the "formal aspect" present in the development of the forms of consciousness from the economic structure. This takes a more explicit form when he enthusiastically endorses Pasukanis' elaboration of the juridical form.[62] But, in general, the impression remains that these points do not go beyond the level of programmatic declarations: in *Marxism and Philosophy* Korsch did not provide a concrete and systematic analysis of the unity of the "formal aspect" and of its "content." It is not a simple fact of psychology of knowledge, whereby Korsch produces "a series of original thoughts which, however, almost regularly are more or less destroyed by their inadequate development."[63] That Korsch is not true to his own program of a materialistic dialectic of the forms of consciousness is due, rather, to the fact that he is not able to indicate the dialectical genesis of these forms in the economic structure. For him, they remain pure forms of consciousness, "expressions" of the economic base to which these forms are related in the same way that a part of a whole is related to another part. But what Korsch calls economic representations or forms of consciousness, in which the economic relations of production are conceptually grasped (*begriffen*),[64] in the "Introduction" to *Contribution to a Critique of Political*

56. *Marxism and Philosophy*, pp. 84-85.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 102. Thus, in Marx and Engels, Marxism is "nothing other than a general expression of the real historical movement (Marx)."

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-62.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-104, and p. 52.

60. "He provides a caricature of Marx's fundamental concept, i.e., that truth is always concrete. Thus, the *result* of materialist and dialectical thought in Lenin and in Marx can never in any form be valid in a *more general way* beyond the momentary experience from which it has been deduced and for which it is meant." Cf. "Lenin und die Komintern," *op.cit.*, p. 325.

61. Letter from Engels to F. Mehring of July 14, 1893, in Marx-Engels, *Ausgewählte Briefe* (Berlin, 1953), p. 549.

62. Cf. Korsch's review of E. Pasukanis, *Allgemeine Rechtslehre und Marxismus,* and of Karl Renner, *Die Rechtsinstitute des Privatrechts und ihre soziale Funktion*, in *Archiv für die Geschichte der Socialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. XV (1930).

63. This is what Engels writes about Comte in a letter to F. Tönnies dated January 24, 1895, in *Ausgewählte Brief, op.cit.*, p. 577.

64. *Marxism and Philosophy*, pp. 81-84.

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Economy, are seen as forms of existence (*Daseinsformen, Existenzbestimmungen*) of a determinate socio-economic formation. As already indicated, if the unity of the "genesis of the determinations of thought and the history of concrete contents" is not understood and conceptually developed as in Lukács, these two sides remain entangled in a simple parallelism of "correspondences," etc.

It thus follows *ex negativo* from *Marxism and Philosophy* that, within historical materialism, it is possible to turn Hegelian categories in the direction of a critique of ideology only by grounding and developing them within the critique of political economy. Even today, this unoriginal but often forgotten principle should still hold for that "society of materialist friends of the Hegelian dialectic" proposed by Lenin.

Korsch in Italy*

by Giacomo Marramao

Before 1966, Italian Marxism was influenced by Lukacs' 'socialist realism' rather than by *History and Class Consciousness*. This predominant interest in aesthetic questions can be ascribed to the lingering influence of Croce's neo-idealism over Italian Marxist intellectuals. Only with the translation of *The Destruction of Reason* and *The Young Hegel* immediately after de-Stalinization in the 1960s did discussion of Lukács' philosophical work begin, along with that of Western Marxism in general.

The Italian translation of *Marxism and Philosophy* appeared in 1966, even before that of *History and Class Consciousness*. Mario Spinella's introduction to Korsch's work was very general and revealed the extent to which Italian Marxism still lagged behind the many problems central to 'critical Marxism.' "Korsch," Spinella wrote, "together with the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness* and the Lenin of the famous article *Under the Banner of Marxism*, is one of the initiators of that Hegel-renaissance within Marxist thought which, despite all contradictoriness...has increasingly influenced an essential current of Marxist research of the last forty years."[1] Spinella did not fail to locate the concrete historical causes for this new departure within 'theoretical Marxism.' When Korsch was writing *Marxism and Philosophy*, the spread of the October revolution to Germany could not yet be ruled out. The re-emergence of the 'philosophy of revolution' was borne out by major historical events: Germany's military defeat, the monarchy's fall, the serious economic and financial crisis, and the shock that ran through the world market, world politics and the international labor movement as a result of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Nonetheless, Spinella's points of departure remained general and were not followed by a thorough analysis. Thus, he identified Korsch with Lukács, and both of them with

*Translated into English by David J. Parent. An earlier draft of this work appeared in Claudio Pozzoli, ed., *Ueber Karl Korsch* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 217-240.

1. M. Spinella, "Karl Korsch e gli sviluppi del marxismo," in Karl Korsch, *Marxismo e Filosofia* (Milan, 1966), p. i.

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Lenin, under the common denominator of the 'Hegel-renaissance.'[2] This diluted Korsch's work to a translation of Lenin's *Under the Banner of Marxism* and *State and Revolution* into the jargon of Western Marxism. Thus, it was only logical for Spinella to misconstrue the meaning of the 1930 *'Antikritik'* and to reduce its theoretical and political significance to a simple work of enlightenment: "The 'Antikritik' once again runs through this critical route [the decline of Leninist theory into a legitimating science—G.M.] and discovers its immediate political and theoretical causes, *not least of which* (is the choice of that formulation which Lenin gave, in *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, to the relation between Marxism and philosophy"[3] (emphasis added).

The radical political difference between Korsch and Lenin had thus been blurred to a purely philosophical disagreement. By not paying sufficient attention to the concrete-historical and political aspect of the question, Spinella avoided the problem of elucidating Korsch's decisive self-understanding in 1929 in reference to Lenin and Leninism. He dissolved the entire process of clarification which Korsch had gone through between 1923 and 1930 into the abstract process of a mere psychological reflection. As for the later development of Korsch's thinking, Spinella was satisfied with the statement: "Korsch's decision led him into practical isolation despite the not insignificant role that he played in some circles as a scholar."[4]

The Italian translation of *Marxism and Philosophy* was followed by numerous reviews stemming from the most varied tendencies of Italian theoretical Marxism.[5] What is most important for the following discussion is undoubtedly Lucio Colletti's trenchant critique.[6] Colletti reproached Korsch for not untying the Gordion knot binding Marx to Hegel: for not seeing the unbridgeable difference between the two. For Colletti, Korsch did not distinguish between Marx's and Hegel's theory of alienation *and* the theory of fetishism: "Korsch does not have a correct concept of fetishism and alienation as seen by Marx and therefore he cannot understand how Marx differs from Hegel. Thus, he confuses Marx's analysis of fetishism, i.e., the critique of capital and of the state, with Hegel's critique of 'scientific reason' and 'positivity.' He thus confuses the critique of *bourgeois society* with idealistic and romantic critiques of science."[7] Thus, Colletti saw *Marxism and Philosophy* as a

2. *Ibid.*, p. iv.

3. *Ibid.*, p. x.

4. *Ibid.* More precise is the 'Nota storica' of Giorgio Backhaus printed in the appendix to that volume as the first—though unsuccessful—attempt to draw Korsch into the debate of the 'New Left'; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 161-176.

5. Among these, cf. especially that of Luciano Amodio, who attacked *Marxism and Philosophy* from a Lukácsian standpoint and claimed that the dialectic was not sufficiently developed in Korsch.

6. Colletti is presently the main representative of Galvano Della Volpe's school of thought. This trend gained prominence in Italy in the second half of the 1950s. Della Volpe's most important theoretical work—*Logica come Scienza Positiva*—had a major influence on Italy's young Marxist intellectuals as a rejection of Stalinism as well as of the subjective idealism of Croce and Gentile. However, by arguing that Marx, by 1843, had laid the logical foundation for his historico-materialist science in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, which he then used positively in *Capital*, Della Volpe reduced Marxism to scientific theory on the model of the natural sciences. In establishing an unbroken continuity in the Marxist corpus, grounded in a methodological unity, Della Volpe ruled out the possibility of a historical-political interpretation of theory. It is Colletti's Dellavolpean heritage that has prevented him from treating Korsch in an historical context.

7. Lucio Colletti, review of *Marxismo e Filosofia* in *Problemi del Socialismo* 10 (1966), p. 777.

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reduction of Marxism to a "restored philosophy" and predicted for it "the same fate as *History and Class Consciousness*." In fact, up to the Italian publication of *Karl Marx* three years later, *Marxism and Philosophy* was not discussed as an independent work, but as a mere appendage to the young Lukács.

After the Italian translation of *Karl Marx*, the Dellavolpeans renewed their discussion of Korsch. Impressed by his designation of Marxism as the 'science of society' they began to revise decisively their previous estimation of Korsch, without, however, questioning the reasons for Korsch's theoretical shift. Their aprioristic interpretation prevented them from grasping the connection between theory and politics in Korsch. Instead of retracting their former judgment of *Marxism and Philosophy*, they merely modified it. While they had formerly regarded his work as a relapse into idealism, they now were satisfied to claim that in 1923, Korsch had looked upon "the scientific analyses of *Capital* with a certain suspicion."[8] The revised judgment, however, remained external. The Dellavolpeans used Korsch to confirm the coherence and validity of their own approach. In effect, they said: "It is not us who have changed, but Korsch." Again, the relation between Hegel and Marx was the crucial point: "In *Karl Marx*," Bedeschi wrote, "the way the Hegel-Marx relation is understood shows new essential developments."[9] The dialectic was no longer seen as a closed metaphysical model, but in terms of its function for understanding experience. Bedeschi's remarks were not without a certain sagacity: the significance of Hegel's works for Korsch was no longer seen as merely methodological, in the sense of having to turn Hegel's dialectics upside down, i.e., to interpret them materialistically, in order to have the entire world-historical series of stages in overall perfection, but as a material one. It is based on the organic entanglement of Hegel's philosophy with the bourgeois system: "In other words, Hegel's work is of fundamental significance for Marx to the extent that he finds in it the contents and ideological reflexes of bourgeois society, or to the extent that Hegel is the spokesman and theorist of this society." These remarks are confirmed by Korsch: "While still formally basing his criticism of Hegel's glorification of the State on the realistic statements concerning the nature of civil society embodied in the same Hegelian work, Marx now definitely abandoned Hegel and all his idealistic philosophy. Instead, he associated himself with those great inquirers into the social nature of man who, in the preceding centuries, had first set up the new idea of Civil Society as a revolutionary slogan, and had even unearthed, in the new science of Political Economy, the material foundations of that new and 'civilized society'."[10]

But if Bedeschi went on to characterize Korsch's critique of Hegel as exclusively philosophical rather than political and revolutionary, and if he dealt with the relation between Hegel and Marx simply in terms of the thesis of the 'break,' he was expressing precisely the Dellavolpean weakness: he neglected Korsch's important initiatives which deserved to be further developed and did not see Korsch's theoretical shortcomings, especially concerning the understanding of *ideology* in its relation to the basis (of the social conditions of production) as well as his designation of Marxism as a 'class science.' But these very historical and theoretical shortcomings made it possible for the Dellavolpeans to appropriate Korsch. According to Korsch, too, Marx essentially broke with Hegel's idealistic philosophy—despite his flirtation with Hegel's

8. Bedeschi, "Introduction" to Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx* (Bari, 1969).
9. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.
10. Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx* (London, 1963), p. 20.

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mode of expression; Korsch also refused to speak of a 'break' between the young and the mature Marx, and argued for the substantial unity between the theory of alienation and the theory of fetishism. Thus, Bedeschi was led to claim a correspondence between Korsch and Della Volpe.[11] But this is tenable only if one disregards the abstract and scholastic nature of this approach. It presupposes that Della Volpe really saw the development of Marx's thought as a progressive self-clarification in relation to the shifting movements of the class struggle, as Korsch had done, and took into consideration Marx's second reading of Hegel in the light of a more mature conception, which understood the critique of the economy as the 'critique of the weapons' of the proletariat. Furthermore, it assumes that Korsch had really rid himself of all 'neo-Hegelian' (or neo-Kantian?) subjective-idealist elements of his thinking.

Actually, Della Volpe depicted the 'theoretical field' of the critique of political economy in a simplified and undialectical way. Thus, he read *Capital* from the perspective of a strictly logical Aristotelianism, abstractly focusing on the principle of non-contradiction. Furthermore, Korsch did not actually give up all ethical-subjective traits, which remain on the political level as voluntarist tendencies.[12] Despite the clarity of a few of his arguments, Bedeschi's attempt ultimately was bound to fail. Della Volpe's rigorous and obstinate 'anti-Hegelianism' could hardly be reconciled with Korsch's dynamic theory which is so closely linked with the events of the class struggle and the problems of political militancy that it resists all systematizations.

It is no accident that the most important attempt to reclaim Korsch in Italy was made by another exponent of the second generation of Dellavolpeans, who was led by his study of *Karl Marx* to break with the fundamental tenets of the Della Volpe school, and thus to initiate a new phase: the 'post-Dellavolpean' period. Despite the flexibility of this theoretical approach, it ultimately ended up pouring more water on the mill-wheel of the so-called 'Italian way to socialism.'

Three central concerns emerge from Giuseppe Vacca's pamphlet, *Lukács o Korsch?*: (a) the elucidation of the relation between Korsch and Lukács in 1923 when their works appeared; (b) the elucidation of the relation between Hegel and Marx, as well as of the specific dialectical function of the concept of totality in their works; (c) the determination of the relation between *Marxism and Philosophy* and *Karl Marx* and the problem of the correct reading of the two works in the context of Korsch's intellectual and political biography.

On the first point, Vacca's view is that although *History and Class Consciousness* and *Marxism and Philosophy* have had a common destiny in the history of Marxism ("both were criticized by the ideologists of the Russian Communist Party as 'deviations' and 'revisions' of the sort that was labeled 'the new Marxist school' or 'Western Marxism'—which included Revai and Fogarosi as well"),[13] they actually took basically

11. Bedeschi, "Introduction," *op.cit.*, p. xxv, note 14.

12. Of course, this cannot be abstractly determined but can only be explained through a confrontation with the *specific historical situation*, the state of the class struggle, and the long 'economic slump' of the international labor movement under the hegemony of Leninism and Stalinism. The decisive factor for Korsch's change of position is the failure of the German revolution: it is at the basis of the *ethical emphasis* of revolutionary subjectivity typical of Korsch.

13. G. Vacca, *Lukács o Korsch?* (Bari, 1969), p. 15. It may be surprising to find such violent attacks against the institutionalized Marxism of the Russian Communist Party coming from a militant intellectual of the Italian Communist Party. But, unlike the French Communist Party, the PCI's cultural policy was always extraordinarily flexible and therefore able to absorb some aspects of even the most 'heterodox' theoretical views. This can be explained by the familiarity of the Italian Communist tradition with bourgeois thought such as subjective idealism (Croce and

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different positions toward the politically decisive problem of the European revolution, the validity of the Leninist model of the party for the working class of highly developed capitalist countries, and especially the relation between the development of theoretical and practical Leninism in the USSR and in the Western Communist movements. According to Vacca, "Korsch's starting point is the need to materialistically historicize the whole experience of the labor movement and its theory, including the Russian revolution and Leninism. Therefore, his objective lies in providing an original interpretation and re-evaluation of Marx's thought. Lukács, on the contrary, believes that the experience of the Russian revolution and of Lenin's work contains a 'theoretical legacy' of extraordinary relevance which provides the "key to the correct understanding of the Marxist method." This "correct method of knowing society and history' must be restored as an inalienable precondition for the development of the proletarian revolution in the West."[14]

The relation betgween Hegel and Marx as well as the theme of the totality (the second point) are also treated differently in the two works. Korsch sought to determine the specific 'theoretical' level of the revolutionary proletarian struggle. For him, to pose the question of the relation between philosophy and Marxism meant not "to pose the problem of a specific philosophy of Marx" but, rather, "to go back to those theoretical models (classical German philosophy) which, to the extent that they were the ideal organic means of a revolutionary process (of the bourgeois revolution), provide a historical example for the organic and critical function of theory, i.e., they present a model for the global theoretical reconstruction of the formation of a society from the standpoint of a particular class (the modern bourgeoisie). Recourse to that theoretical model makes it possible to determine the analogous historical function which the Marxist critique of bourgeois society as a whole must have for the proletariat and its revolution."[15] According to Vacca, already in *Marxism and Philosophy* the critique of political economy of the mature Marx is given primacy over the philosophical critique of bourgeois representative government in the young Marx. For Marxism there is a connection between the abolition of philosophy and the abolition of the state. For Korsch this connection entails investigating the practical-revolutionary significance of philosophy and of all social forms of consciousness for historical reality. This is why Korsch concentrated on investigating the reality-character of ideology. According to Vacca, such a view of the reality of forms of consciousness constitutes the dialectical nature of Marxism: "Dialectics is for Korsch the theoretical position which introduces a connection of continuity and articulation between the social conditions and the forms of consciousness as an expression of them, by fixating precisely the reality of these forms of consciousness."[16] *Only* from this viewpoint is there for Korsch a continuity between Hegel and Marx; if the "continuity of the dialectical method from Hegel to Marx in Korsch's analyses merely designates their analogous views of the *reality* of the forms of consciousness," then what necessarily follows is "the regaining of

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Gentile). In fact, subjective idealism exercised great influence on party leaders such as Gramsci and Togliatti.

14. Vacca, *op.cit.*, p. 35. Vacca can claim this gap between *History and Class Consciousness* and *Marxism and Philosophy* because he backdates the ideas of the "Anti-kritik" of 1930. Here his analysis betrays a certain apriorism and an inadequate historical articulation of the problem.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43. The political content of Vacca's interpretation is hidden precisely at this point. It thus intervened in the discussion in progress within the Italian Communist Party concerning the relations between the party and mass movements.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

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the category of *totality*, which Korsch prescribes when he re-problematizes the relation between Marx and philosophy."[17] In *Marxism and Philosophy* regaining the category of totality does not imply the "re-establishment of a philosophical category, of a general 'purely' epistemological principle," but the "reconstruction of the complex unity of Marx's critiques "as an organic whole, outside which it is impossible to understand the historical movement of the formation of bourgeois society and the revolutionary nature of the proletariat's social practice. Regaining the totality thus means to reconstruct Marx's *critical* thinking, understood in its irreducibility to a form of particular science or philosophy and in its authentic nature as the theoretical critique of bourgeois society."[18]

Starting from a similar appraisal of the historical situation, Lukács posed instead "a problem of theoretical orthodoxy." He also started with a basic canon of historical materialism, which positivist Marxism as well as the neo-idealism of the Second International had lost sight of: the reality of the forms of consciousness and of ideology in general. For Lukács, the epoch-making character of historical materialism consisted in seeing that the apparently independent systems of English political economy and of classical German philosophy "were recognized as mere factors of a comprehensive whole; that their apparent independence could be abolished." According to Vacca, the possible abolition of their "apparent independence" in Lukács' analysis departs "more and more from the practical critique of bourgeois society as a whole, as it is advanced by the struggle of the revolutionary proeltarian class and becomes a viable task within a correct theory."[19] For Lukács, the 'apparent independence' of those systems implies its ideological nature. Although he admitted the reality of ideologies, he also tended to conceive of them as "false" by virtue of being *partial* forms of consciousness "and so to relegate the problem of the truth of knowledge—which for Marx was a problem of 'social practice'—implicitly to the independent level of pure theory whereby the problem of theory is posed as the problem of a dialectic between partial and total forms of knowledge."[20] The proletariat no longer stands in the center of contemporary history by constituting in its real movement the constant "truth-criterion" of theory (Korsch) but, rather, insofar as it alone is capable of correctly posing the problem of the relationship to society as a whole. According to Vacca, once truth as a totality is associated with the proletariat as the absolute subject-object of the course of history, and falsehood is associated with the forms of consciousness of the social reality of the bourgeoisie, we are on "a dangerous path" which ultimately reduces the Marxist theory of ideology to the historicist relativism of the 'sociology of knowledge.' Thus, Lukács' totality does not refer to the totality of the historical-empirical analyses whereby Marxist theory grasps the knowledge of an entire epoch of social economic formation, but to "the general knowledge of the processuality of the real and of the general context of the 'phenomena'."[21]

Having shown the wide gap between *Marxism and Philosophy* and *History and Class Consciousness*, Vacca analyzed *Karl Marx* as the last confirmation of his thesis concerning the "radical difference between Korsch and Lukács" (the third point). Here, Vacca denies any substantial changes in Korsch's intellectual and political

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 58.

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biography. Instead, he argues that there is a definite continuity between the approach to the problem in *Marxism and Philosophy* and in *Karl Marx*: the 'scientificity' of Marxist theory discussed in *Karl Marx* is based on its *critical* character, which for Korsch is closely related to its *dialectical* character. The scattered elements of Marxism cannot be reunited by a purely mental process; the analytic-theoretical *corpus* of Marx has an organicity (always in the *negative* sense, to the extent that it is *critique* of social conditions and of bourgeois forms of social consciousness) only because "the social struggle of the modern proletariat increasingly explains the inner movement of this organism."[22] Unlike Lukács, Korsch saw the critical nature of Marxism rooted in the specific form of knowledge of the proletariat and related to the problems that appear in its struggle.

Despite the acuity of this interpretation, which met with considerable resistance in the political and intellectual atmosphere of the Italian Communist Party,[23] Vacca's interpretation concludes with an attempt to instrumentalize Korsch's positions as political weapons in controversies within the party such as the relation between party and mass movements provoked by the outbreak of the 1968 mass struggles. This instrumentalization was possible to the extent that the debate remained abstract and detached from the historical relation between Korsch and the official labor movement. Despite the provocative and apparently radical posture,[24] Vacca's insistence on the priority of the class struggle and the lack of any concern for the *anticipatory* nature of theory betrays a historicist adaptation of theory. Any such account of the anticipatory nature of theory would have entailed a concrete political revision in the relationship between the Italian Communist Party, which was still oscillating between a badly hidden manipulation and open rejection, and the student mass movement, as well as the new forms of proletarian struggle which achieved a new peak of 'autonomy' in Italy in 1969. It is no accident that in this historical context, Vacca's theoretical critique was aimed mainly at 'economism': the so-called *ouvrièrist* current which had considerable influence within and outside the labor movement since the publication of the theoretical journal *Quaderni Rossi* in the early 1960s.[25] Moreover, Vacca fell into an uncritical glorification of Korsch's work for having overcome the relapses into the fetishism of the productive forces by the Second and

22. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

23. Symptomatic, in this respect, was Pasquinelli's attack on Vacca. Cf. "Ne Lukács, ne Korsch," in *Critica Marxista* 4 (1970), pp. 178-196. Made from an 'Althusserian standpoint,' this attack was based on the very polemical interpretation of 'critical Marxism' as outlined in Marzio Vacatello, *Lukács: Da 'Storia e Coscienza di Classe' al Giudizio sulla Cultura Borghese* (Florence, 1968).

24. The foreword to Vacca's *Lukács o Korsch?* closed as follows: "The confidence with which Vacca decides on a delicate point linking theory and practice perhaps proclaims for the first time a possible opening of the Communist camp to an unprejudiced debate on one of the last taboos which survived de-Stalinization: Leninism" (p. 4).

25. The 'New Left,' in turn, committed the serious mistake of paying only scant attention to Korsch or (like the followers of Mario Tronti), it even hastened to reject him as a subjectivist utopian and reactionary. The main target of this polemic was Korsch's conception of the workers' councils. The 'reactionary' character of the workers' council idea in general (and that of Korsch in particular) was seen to consist in the fact that it had its *material basis* in the figure of the 'professional worker,' i.e., in a particular type of 'worker aristocracy.' "Korsch's writings reveal the connection between administration and its productivist function. Control over the economic cycle by the worker-producer is wholly directed to growth of production of goods by increasing the productivity of labor: the worker administers the entire process of production in the name of development" (Paolo Perulli, "Note sui delegati," in *Contropiano* 2 [1970], pp. 366-367n).

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Third Internationals. Yet, Vacca's interpretation left unclarified the question of a real political historization of Korsch's work and the question of the possible limits of Korsch's thinking about the *anticipatory* nature of theory.

A serious historical and political thematization of Korsch's intellectual development was provided shortly thereafter by Gian Enrico Rusconi's introduction to the Italian translation of *The Materialistic View of History* (*Anti-Kautsky*).[26] By closely analyzing Korsch's historical development as that of a militant revolutionary, Rusconi reiterated and elaborated a thesis which he had already outlined three years earlier: "The science of society of Korsch's Marxism, though it does not exclude elements which could bring about a positive construction of such a science, itself contains none. Korsch's Marxist theory is so 'critical and negative' that its final goal, the liberation of man, becomes contentless, although this is one of the bases of the theory."[27] This impotence of Korsch's critical and analytical tools cannot be understood merely by a philosophical contemplation of his 'thinking'—which would wrongly deal with his thoughts as if they constituted an organic and homogeneous whole—but rather, it expresses the effect on his theory of the "revolution which did not take place." The tragic political impotence of Korsch's analysis characterizes the impotence of a man who waited in vain for the crisis to erupt, for the collapse, or—in the years of his American exile—for the awakening of revolutionary consciousness in the proletariat as a result of the capitalist accumulation process. But "paradoxically, this very political impotence generates the historical fertility of Korsch's Marxism,"[28] for it negatively derives the need for a critical theory of bourgeois society and of a class science of the proletariat from the historically realized alternative to revolution. Today, more than ever, *all* the questions Korsch asked are still unanswered: "What deformations are undergone by the theory of revolution, i.e., Marxism, in an historical context and with organizations that are not objectively revolutionary? What conceptual arsenal does the revolutionary 'movement' really need to regain the necessary level of revolutionary 'theory'? How can the problem of the 'science of society' be reformulated in Marx's sense? How are Kautsky's and Lenin's theories related to it?"[29] From this perspective, Rusconi analyzed Korsch's intellectual development, from his council experiences to his critique of Leninism, in the light of his *political radicalization* during the decisive events of 1919, 1923, 1926, and 1929—which Rusconi calls the 'turning point' of Korsch's theoretical evolution. The relevance of the polemic against Kautsky consists in the fact that it is "one of the constant elements in Korsch's theoretical and practical works."[30] This is because of the historical incorporation of Kautskyism into the German labor movement and because of the discovery of a few pervasive factors in the relation of theory and practice in the Second International, which will also reappear in Third—though in a changed global context. In dealing with Kautsky, Korsch "created the analytical and theoretical tools for that critique which was politically closest to his heart: his critique of Leninism-Stalinism."

This does not mean for Rusconi that there is in Korsch a complete foundation or organic, systematic formation of a revolutionary theory for advanced capitalist

26. G.E. Rusconi, "Contro Kautsky, contro Lenin," introduction to K. Korsch, *Il Materialismo Storico* (Bari, 1971).

27. G.E. Rusconi, *La Teoria Critica della Società* (Bologna, 1968), p. 204.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

29. This was the 'missing link' in Vacca's interpretation: as already indicated, Vacca back-dated the ideas of the "Anti-kritik" from 1930 to 1923.

30. G.E. Rusconi, "Contro Kautsky, contro Lenin," *op.cit.*, p. x.

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societies. On the contrary, Rusconi shows how the idea of workers' councils and the permanent attachment to the mass movement (i.e., to theoretical and political anti-vanguard positions) have a central place in Korsch,[31] how Korsch's interest shifts to the 'science of society,' of which *Capital* is the model, and thus differs considerably from the naive thinking of his contemporary Pannekoek, and finally how Korsch equates Kautskyism and Leninism. Rusconi thus indicates the vitality as well as the limits of Korsch's positions, his inability to the end of his life to give a *positive* answer to the burning problems of contemporary Marxism. The simple recourse to the proletarian mass movement as the central axis of theory remains an empty assurance when it gives no analytically exhaustive answers. "But what is the criterion," Rusconi concludes, "by virtue of which the validity or invalidity of Lenin's thinking can be decided, if Lenin and Korsch both accept the standpoint that theory has a *functional* character for the interests of the proletariat? It can be a question neither of a merely theoretical nor only of a pragmatic criterion. Here we are at the heart of the problem of the dialectical relation of theory and practice. Korsch's indications are important but inadequate."[32]

To the end of his life, in the despair of his repeatedly frustrated expectations for the outbreak of revolution, Korsch considered the workers' council movement as the authentic proletarian model of revolution as contraposed to institutionalized Marxism and Leninist 'Jacobinism.' "But doesn't Korsch thereby run the danger of clinging to an ideal model of proletarian revolution, of exposing himself to the charge of abstraction, and of contradicting the principle of 'historical specification' in the analysis of social phenomena, which constitutes one of his central positive points? If the specific contribution of Lenin's revolutionary theory is seen only negatively, then not only do we lose an essential factor of real contemporary history, but also the possibility to 'apply' the Marxist method of investigation emphatically affirmed in the abstract."[33]

Through his brief but intensive discussion of Korsch, Rusconi has finally created in Italy the preconditions for a balanced evaluation of this great revolutionary. Although it leaves open the fundamental theoretical questions, it has at least posed them correctly, thereby exposing the uncritical glorification of Korsch's work typical of the Dellavolpeans and post-Dellavolpeans. Can it be claimed, as Vacca and Bedeschi do, that Korsch in 1938 (*Karl Marx*) had given up all the idealist elements of his thought?[34] As already suggested, the basic flaw in the Dellavolpean interpretation of Korsch is that for political reasons it neglects the most important features of Korsch's theory and it shares the theoretical shortcomings of Korsch's theory, expressed in Korsch's understanding of ideology in its relation to the base, i.e., the social relations of production. For the Dellavolpean and post-Dellavolpean interpretation, the relation between Hegel and Marx in Korsch is reducible to the critical use of the

31. *Ibid.*, pp. xii-xxiii. Rusconi had already written an article on the problematic of workers' councils in Korsch on the occasion of the publication of the Italian translation of Karl Korsch's *Schriften zur Sozialisierung* and *Arbeitsrecht für Betriebsräte* in a single volume under the title *Consigli di Fabricca e Socializzzione* (Bari, 1970). It was entitled "Karl Korsch e la Strategia Consigliare-Sindicale,' in *Problemi del Socialismo* 41 (1969), pp. 762-777. The same subject is treated in an article by P. Manganaro, "La Teoria dei Consigli Operai nel Pensiero di Korsch," in *Giovane critica* 20 (1969), pp. 74-77.

32. *Ibid.*, p. lx.

33. *Ibid.*, p. lxii.

34. Cf. Bedeschi, *op.cit.*, p. xxif., and Vacca, *op.cit.*, pp. 110-111.

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realistic (i.e., economic, social and political) content of the Hegelian system insofar as Hegel was the ideologist of bourgeois society; and Marx's radical critique and fundamental change of the Hegelian methodology (the concept of 'historical specification'). But in Korsch this relation is further determined and also leaves a few questions unsolved. It is *further determined* insofar as he is inclined to deal with *Hegel in relation to Ricardo* by making both the object of the critique of ideology. Thus Korsch writes in *Karl Marx*: "Even in dealing with the material conditions of existing society, nowhere passed beyond the range of bourgeois thought. Still this new world of the bourgeoisie with its internal opposition ranging themselves like so many unbridgeable chasms, as it was now philosophically exposed by Hegel under the direct influence of Ricardo, stood in striking contrast to that 'best of all possible worlds,' into which even the most daring among the bourgeois thinkers of the preceding generation had ideologically transfigured the hard facts of existing social life. In Ricardo's economic system and in Hegel's philosophy, bourgeois society reached the highest grade of critical self-consciousness of which it was capable without violating its own principles."[35] Korsch leaves unanswered questions insofar as he merely tends to subsume and ascribe theories and ideologies to social classes. Moreover he blurs the distinction between theory and ideology by letting the first correspond to its underlying phase of social development while dissolving the second into something standing in an inadequate and illusory relation to its own activity (as in the case of the 'vulgar Marxism' of the Second International and the 'Diamat' of the Third International). Consequently, despite the 'Copernican revolution,' which moved the proletariat and the class struggle to the center of historical development as a permanent reference point whereby theory must be tested, Korsch's conception runs the danger of losing sight of the anticipatory content of theory and its critical-emancipatory potential.[36]

Furio Cerutti recently joined in the dispute over these problems and even reversed the thrust of Vacca's interpretation (though he stays within the perspective of 'critical Marxism'): in Lukács and not in Korsch one can find the *positive* elements for a reconstruction of revolutionary theory for advanced capitalistic societies. In Korsch it is possible to abstract the problem of class consciousness, i.e., the formation of the proletariat into a 'class by itself.' The fact that Korsch did not do justice to his own program of a materialist dialectic of forms of consciousness is explained in the fact that he was unable to trace the dialectical genesis of these forms from the economic structure.[37] According to Cerutti, Korsch ends up by abstractly separating the economic social structure from the intellectual dimension, to subsequently establish an extrinsic relation of 'correspondence' between them (the forms of consciousness as 'forms of expression' or 'reflections' of the economic basis). But what Korsch calls 'forms of consciousness' are in Marx's *Introduction* (1857) to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 'forms of Being' (*Daseinsformen*), and determinations

35. Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx, op.cit.*, pp. 61-62.

36. These reservations do not go in the same direction as those of Oskar Negt in his essay, "Theory, Empiricism and Class Struggle," in this issue of *Telos*. The 'theoretical deficiency' in Korsch is not in the separation of production and class struggle, and therefore in the failure to develop a "materialist social science." Rather, it is in the *lack of a structural context between the critique of philosophy and ideology and the critique of the economy*. This lack is expressed in a division of the class into a material side within production and a spiritual side. Thus, the genesis of the independence of the latter is not analyzed from the specific historical dialectic of the material process of production, but is the result of a mysterious "qualitative outburst" of a neo-Kantian ethical-transcendental subjectivity.

37. Cf. F. Cerutti, "Hegel, Lukács and Korsch" in this issue of *Telos*.

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of existence (*Existenzbestimmungen*) of a certain phase of economic social formation. The scientific foundation of revolutionary subjectivity is impossible unless, as in Lukács, the unity of the genesis of thought-determinations with the history of the concrete contents is conceptually understood and developed. Contrary to Vacca's premature liquidation of *History and Class Consciousness*, Cerutti stresses that "despite all the 'messianically' glorified Leninism... the early Lukács' theory of revolution guards against decline into a legitimatory science."[38]

Although Cerutti's remarks are useful and important, the problem remains unsolved. A great deal of Korsch's work, perhaps even the most important, is still practically unknown. But today there is a greater need than ever before to investigate the development of this theoretician and revolutionary from a concrete and historical viewpoint. It is difficult to foresee whether in the future the ideas of Korsch will succeed in advancing beyond the closed atmosphere of political and purely intellectual discussions to which the 'leadership' of the Italian Communist Party has condemned him, or whether his ideas can become an object of authentic theoretical and political reflection. One thing is certain: A critical analysis of Korsch cannot develop without precise answers to the most pressing questions posed by the concrete history of the labor movement in the West—questions and problems that comprise an important part of *our* current political consciousness (and 'false consciousness').

38. *Ibid.* Italian extraparliamentary groups have made far greater use of the thematic of the young Lukács than that of Korsch. Cf. e.g., the essay by Giairo Daghini, "Lukács' Theory of the Offensive," *Telos* 10 (Winter 1971), pp. 147-154.

The Young Hegel and the Dialectic of Social Production

by Richard Winfield

When dialectical and historical materialism is shorn of the Diamat and confronted with the incommensurably more systematic argument within the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, a certain spectre comes out of its neglected corner to haunt all who speak in the name of the classics. This chimera is the great secret of Marxist discussion, holding the unspoken truth that Marx's determination of capital is but the thematization of a *particular* sphere of interaction, a thematization which by itself can neither ground its own method nor establish the immediate access of its starting point nor pose itself as the accomplished grasp of the totality of social reality.

It is a rare moment when such necessary admission is not passed over in silence. Even among all the literature addressed to the seminal relation of Hegel and Marx, one hardly finds any serious recognition of the pressing need to finally specify that philosophical program which can give determinateness to the dialectical method, realize that method's immanent unity with the concept of capital, and abolish the fragmentary status of the *Grundrisse's* and *Capital's* essential argument.

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One of the few exceptions to this conspiracy of indifference is Lukács' *The Young Hegel*. Whatever be the merits of this work's actual conclusions, it has at least brought the focus of Hegel and Marx interpretation to the point of examining the relationship between the emergence of dialectical presuppositionless determination and the problem of thematizing that sphere of social interaction developed by Marx in the concept of capital and Hegel in the System of Needs. For here Lukács has attempted to establish the continuity of Hegel and Marx by demonstrating how the young Hegel rises to overcome the last remnants of egological discourse in resolutely confronting the methodological requirements of the social determination of production to which Marx will later devote the investigations of his mature writings. And because it is bourgeois society which constitutes itself so that need and labor achieve their definiteness wholly through the pure intersubjective self-activity of capital, and without reference to any natural or reflective determinations, Lukács is also able to world-historically situate Hegel's encounter with the problem of determining production in and through interaction. On this dual basis *The Young Hegel* goes beyond mere Hegel interpretation to instead attempt an elucidation of the theoretical framework where the very task of *Capital* can have its *grounded* solution.

If such a work were of solely historiographic interest, it might suffice to remark that here Lukács has once again revealed the sham of his own self-purported departure from the Hegelianism of his early writing. For in simply drawing a compass wide enough to indicate an immanent relation between the concept of capital and the kind of philosophical considerations first developed by Hegel, Lukács has indeed reaffirmed a most serious respect both for Hegel's own program and for the fundamentally philosophical status of Marx's principal systematic writings, the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*.

Yet, the very scope of Lukács' expressed intention in *The Young Hegel* demands a response that rises above the gossip of a sociology of knowledge.

Certainly, the critical reception greeting *The Young Hegel* since its appearance in 1948 has failed to meet this challenge and come to grips with the stated problem and the exigency of its resolution.

In Eastern Europe the little attention paid the work[1] has dwelt upon the formal consideration of whether or not Lukács has slighted the unquestionable theoretical leadership of Marx and Engels by emphasizing the progressive strain in Hegel's thought and thereby obscuring the eternal struggle of materialism and idealism in the annals of philosophical development. On the one hand, we have the likes of Bela Fogarasi seeing fit to defend Lukács' favorable portrayal of Hegel in so far as *The Young Hegel* does not pretend to judge the entirety of Hegelian philosophy, but only to consider its positive, and most rational moments.[2] On the other hand, there is the sharp criticism such as Rugard Otto Gropp delivers, where Lukács is taken to task for having obliterated that epochal distinction between Hegel's objective idealist dialectic and the materialist dialectic of Marx.[3]

1. Long out of print in its East German edition, *The Young Hegel* has still not appeared in Hungarian translation. Cf. Tibor Hanak, *Lukács war anders*, (Meisenheim am Glan, 1973), p. 104.

2. Bela Fogarasi, "Marxistischer Historiker der Philosophie," *Aufbau* 11 (1955), p. 362. In his Hegel book, *Subjekt-Objekt*, Ernst Bloch similarly gives *The Young Hegel* merely passing mention for having conscientiously brought out the progressive side of Hegel's youthful development. Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Subjekt-Objekt: Erläuterungen zu Hegel* (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 51ff.

3. Rugard Otto Gropp, "Die marxistische dialektische Methode und ihr Gegensatz zur

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In the West, comment has basically limited itself to equally barren acknowledgements of Lukács' emphasis upon the constitutive importance of the concept of labor in Hegel's development and of the role which the entrenchment of Marx in the Hegelian tradition can play in freeing Marxist ideology of its banal dogmatism.[4] To linger on such general pronouncements is as unnecessary as it is tiresome. Lukács has sought to strip away the hesitation paralyzing the discussion of Hegel and Marx, and it is high time to take up the systematic question itself.

In recognition of the need to finally ground the discourse of *Capital*, Lukács has indeed taken the magistral course of trying to specify the immanent relation of the dialectical method to the thematization of social production.[5] Yet, *The Young Hegel* ultimately fails in this important attempt because its own inadequate conception of dialectical determination finally undermines the sought-after interactive specification of labor.

This root deformation of the dialectic is Lukács' notion of the Subject-Object whose *Entäusserung* or externalization is to constitute the unqualified process of determination where universality and particularity no longer fall asunder. After having well documented the young Hegel's successive rejections of the egological positing of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, Lukács seizes this self-mediating identity of the concept and its reality as that with which Hegel overcomes the standpoint of reflection. Yet in so doing, Lukács has actually given a Schellingian misinterpretation of Hegel's concept of *Geist* (or intersubjectivity) which effectively maintains the distinctions of consciousness, of subject and object, within their primordial identity, instead of advancing to the threshold of the self-determining interaction through which Hegel will actually accomplish the thematization of self-consciousenss. In this sense, the notion of the Subject-Object and its *Entäusserung* (which already occupied center stage in *History and Class Consciousness*) remains subject to the same criticism that the young Hegel levied against Schelling's resurrection of intellectual intuition—that the purported presuppositionless self-activity still begins with an assumed reflective determinacy.

The source of such error lies in that same reduction of the Hegelian inquiry to an egological positing which Marx performed in his *1844 Manuscripts'* discussion of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and which Lenin repeated in his notebooks on Hegel's *Logic*. Just as these two predecessors had done, so Lukács loses sight of the systematic role which the *Phenomenology of Spirit* fulfills as the deduction of the concept of Science,[6] as that necessary introduction to the presuppositionless beginning from which the dialectical logic can begin. Rather than heeding Hegel's own strictures on the matter, Lukács has tended to interpret the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as a work which not only

idealistischen Dialektik Hegels," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 1:2 (1954).

4. As examples, see Iring Fetscher, "Georg Lukács: Der junge Hegel" in *Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger* II:2 (1950), and Hermann Lubbe, "Zur marxistischen Auslegung Hegels," *Philosophische Rundschau* 2 (1954-55).

5. Social production is here used throughout to denote that sphere of bourgeois society where the private self-seeking person obtains social individuation by means of capital's intersubjective specification of the factors of need and labor.

6. For a discussion of how the *Phenomenology of Spirit* should be understood as this kind of a deduction, see Kenley Dove's article, "Hegel's Phenomenological Method," in *The Review of Metaphysics* XXIII:4 (Issue 92—June, 1970), and, also by the same author, "Hegel's 'Deduction of the Concept of Science'," *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science* XXIII.

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observes a given subject matter (i.e., consciousness) examining its own truth claims, but which also presents the determinations *per se* of such varied topics as labor, commodity exchange, and world history. For this reason, Lukács is led to mistakenly identify the structure of the *Phenomenology* with the divisions of the *Encyclopedia*, conflating the System with its propadeutic.[7] The crucial result of all this is that Lukács understands the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to culminate in a specification of the Subject-Object Totality itself, and thereby to take on the dimension of a doctrine of the dialectical method. Like most commentators, he fails to recognize that the final movement of the *Phenomenology* renders the moments of *in itselfness* and *for itselfness* (*the* generic distinctions of consciousness) indistinguishable, so that we are left not with the concept of an intellectual intuition, nor even of the spiritual (*geistige*) unity of interaction, but with the utterly unanalyzable indeterminate immediacy of Being; which *is* determinateness freed of the presupposition of a knowing self.

Instead of grasping the significance of this result, Lukács traps the dialectic within the confines of self-reflection, turning from the concrete determining of Hegel's *Science of Logic* back to the abstract identity of subject and object. What this entails for the social determination of production is so evident that Lukács can waste no time with any mediating argument. *The Young Hegel* proclaims: the most readily graspable and the most essential embodiment of the Subject-Object *Entäusserung* is nothing other than labor itself. Indeed, if determination is to be an egological positing, then production cannot escape being subsumed under categories of reflection. Yet, Lukács goes beyond the implied reduction of production to technique to celebrate labor as that primordial praxis accomplishing the interpenetration of universality and particularity which grounds self-consciousness.

Following the example of the *1844 Manuscripts,* Lukács construes labor to be the rudimentary real *Entäusserung* whose own existence is a pure self-positing. However, because Lukács conceives the laboring activity as the monological relationship of the self-conscious individual and nature, he presupposes both the intentionality of the agent and the facticity of the object of his formative action. Thus, the sought-after Subject-Object identity is actually a *conditioned* instrumental process where agent, act and product fall asunder. Almost despite himself, Lukács makes this patently obvious when he seizes upon certain isolated determinations from the *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* to declare that Hegel has revealed the *Entäusserung* of labor by describing the teleological nature of its act. Lukács' understanding of this relationship, however, has little in common with the determination Hegel gives Teleology in the *Logic*. For here *The Young Hegel* rather presents a purposive laboring akin to the process of *Techné* which Plato and Aristotle had developed in order to account for the imposition of a *given* form upon some entity.[8] *That* "teleological" formative action can result in nothing other than an utterly *external* union of universality and particularity, where the presupposed subject subsumes the object under the represented form leading his act.

Lukács' attempt to determine labor in terms of a "dialectic" of intellectual intuition

7. Habermas openly appropriates this incorrect description of the *Phenomenology's* structure within his discussion of Hegel. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, (Boston, 1971), p. 19.

8. See M.B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel*, (Oxford, 1968), for a masterly account of why the concept of *Techné* cannot be used in the thematization of modern capitalist society.

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finally resolves into this reduction of production to a monological technique. Although he still claims that labor's *Entäusserung* is the *Urform* of social relations (as he will continue to do in *Zur Ontologie des gesellschaftlichen Seins*), it is clear that such labor has actually excluded itself from interaction altogether. This is not due to any mere oversight on Lukács' part. It rather stems from the fundamental inability of categories of reflection to grasp labor as a moment in the constitution of social reality.[9]

If Lukács had instead remained true to his original questioning, there would have been little possibility of identifying dialectical determination with Subject-Object *Entäusserung* and of depicting labor in corresponding egological terms. For, as Lukács himself asserts time and again, *the* problem demanding the dialectical method is not on the order of realizing the autonomy of reflection, but of determining the self-specifying process of *interaction* which can comprehend the dilemma of modernity. *The Young Hegel* argues conclusively on this point: Hegel achieves the epoch-making insight that bourgeois society encompasses a sphere of interaction where the private individual is actually constituted in indifference to natural, given determinations, and wholly in and through intersubjectively defined mediations of need and labor; he realizes that the Practical Reason of reflection can no more contain the heterogeneous particularity of the bourgeois' self-seeking than it can overcome the hypothetical character of a formal positing. What, then, is the theoretical framework able to conceive of an *existing* social reality whose system of production individuates itself in the particular subjectivity of the modern private man? What, then, if not a dialectical method superseding the aporetic distinctions of consciousness with the intersubjective self-activity of *Geist*?

Here, in this turn to the threshold of reciprocal recognition, of self-developing interaction, of social determination; in the departure from egological positing, we have the basis for the immanent bond between the dialectic and the problem of social production.

Again, Lukács leads us inexorably to this point, only to let go the implied specifications of both the dialectical method and the concept of capital. But the young Hegel did not let this issue drop. Nor did he limit his grasp of bourgeois society to unromatic *observations* of the brutal life of a burgeoning capitalism, so that latter-day Marxists could pardon him for the redeeming realism within the mystical shell. Lukács would link the argument of the *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* to Adam Smith, but no, Hegel does not incorporate the teachings of the *Wealth of Nations* any more than he does those of Stewart. For, unnoticed if not unknown to both Marx and Hegel scholarship, it is Hegel who first carries out the Critique of Political Economy. By bringing the dialectical method to bear upon the thematization of bourgeois society, Hegel has been able to distinguish and transcend the limits of classical political economy by overcoming all reductions of social production to either natural relations or an egologically informed technique. He has instead embarked upon an intersubjective formulation of the System of Needs. And it is to this endeavor that one must turn in order to confront the grounded determination of capital.

Lukács never draws his inquiry to the point of examining that actual specification of bourgeois society which the presuppositionless self-developing determination of Hegelian Science comes to accomplish. If he had, he would have brought *The Young Hegel's* argument to a discussion of the particular inadequacy which marks the *System*

9. For a brief discussion of this inability, see Richard Winfield, "The Dilemma of Labor," *Telos* 24 (Summer 1975), pp. 115-128.

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der Sittlichkeit and the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* as errant forerunners of the *Philosophy of Right*'s principled program for the determination of social production.

An account of Hegel's development which distinguishes the *Philosophy of Right* from his earlier writings on social theory would normally meet this challenge by focusing attention upon Civil Society's liberation of the production process from the traditional subsumption under categories of the Household, the political regime, or Natural Law. With this orientation, Manfred Riedel draws upon many of Lukács' own remarks to observe that in Hegel's early writings, "the analyses of the labor process generally either stand uncomfortably under titles such as 'the People' or 'Government,' or issue forth independently from one another within the framework of the 'practical' process of the Living with Nature. The young Hegel places the rock-hard facts of Modernity—work and the division of labor, machinery, money and the commodity, wealth and poverty—almost untrimmed next to the overwhelmingly gripping and vital cultural tradition of antiquity, without examining these in themselves or even being able to systematically join them in relationship with one another."[10]

We find, for example, that in the *System der Sittlichkeit* the process of production is limited to the activity of a particular Estate (*Stand*),[11] and is in general subordinated within the political sphere of Government (*Regierung*).[12] In the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* this tendency is maintained, since the System of Needs still falls under the politicl designtion of the State[13] even though it maintains a relative independence as a special sphere of existing recognition (*Anerkanntseins*).[14]

It is, of course, no small wonder that the *Philosophy of Right's* departure from such positions has important consequences for a Marxist theory of the State. Yet, when the dialectic of the system of production is itself at issue, still another distinction must be addressed. This concerns the relation between the intersubjectively specified determinations of Abstract Right and the System of Needs. For whereas the mature system elaborator operates a radical demarcation of Abstract Right from the self-constitution of social production, the young Hegel is unable to hold the two spheres apart, and articulate the actual specificity of the commodity determination and its underlying labor process.

A work that is to bring into relief the bond between the dialectic and the thematization of bourgeois society in Hegel's philosophical development cannot turn its eyes from this problem, particularly when the confusion over relations of Abstract Right and those of Civil Society has so penetrated Marxist discussion. *The Young Hegel's* discussion of the *System der Sittlichkeit* and the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* utterly fails in this respect, and must be supplemented.

To begin with, one cannot overlook how the *System der Sittlichkeit* introduces Abstract Right after *machine labor* (*Maschinearbeit*) has posited the possession of a product that is no longer in relation to the particular need of its owner, but is universally related to the need of others.[15] There Hegel writes: "The relation to an object

10. Manfred Riedel, *Studien zu Hegels Rechtsphilosophie*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1970), p. 152.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
15. The possession of the product "...no longer expresses need for the same, but rather...(i.e.) in relation to the use of others." Hegel, *System der Sittlichkeit*, (Hamburg, 1967), p. 26.

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which an individual acquires for the sake of need and use so that it is here posited that he has not himself produced it for his personal consumption, a consumption in which he accordingly does not negate his own labor, – this is the beginning of rightful (*rechtlichen*), formally ethical (*sittlichen*) satisfaction and possession."[16] The implied derivation makes the maintenance of the bond of the worker to *his* product which *he* does not consume the real source of the abstract universality of Property, the Person, and Contract. This signifies, however, the effective negation of the very notion of *machine labor* with which the young Hegel has taken a first step towards describing a socially determined labor process.

For Hegel has just shown that the *machine labor* upon which the separation of *possession* from *use* is based actually subjugates the individual worker to the universal labor process, where "the universal itself is governing in the singular or particular."[17] On the one hand, "this labor, which is absorbed by the object as a whole, divides within itself to become an individual laboring activity,"[18] and on the other hand, through the machine process "the unrest of the concept's subjectivity is itself posited outside the subject."[19]

To be consistent with this determining, one would correctly observe that the *subjective* relation of the laboring individual to both the object which is worked upon and to the finished product *is* no longer. Here the laborer is posited as a participant in a commodity circulation to which his labor *as his own* maintains no specific abiding relationship.

Yet, when instead Hegel makes Abstract Right the immediate result of *machine labor*, he destroys that context of social production. A standpoint of reflection is reinstated to inform the labor process with the subjective determining of the individual laborer. The universal realm of commodity circulation must then give way to the opposition of a free will set against a rightless world of the *factor* (*die Sache*).[20]

Lukács also passes over the fact that the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* brings this nascent repulsion of Abstract Right from out of Civil Society yet farther, for here the System of Needs has come still closer to its concrete form. From the very moment that the argument of the *Realphilosophie* reaches *actual intersubjectivity* (*wirklicher Geist*), the overcoming of the abstract will is proclaimed.[21] "The *being of recognition is immediately* reality and within its element the Person has the actuality of its *being-for-self* for the first time; that is, the Person is laboring and satisfying its needs. *Here desire first attains the right to come forward*, for it is *actual*, i.e., it itself has *universal intersubjective* (*geistige*) *being*: the laboring of all and for all, as well as satisfaction and the satisfaction of all. Each serves the other and provides help; the individual as particular first here achieves determinate being."[22]

This is the system of interdependence of needy private individuals in its most general form. The self-seeking acquisition of commodities through individual labor has yet to

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29
17. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
20. Following Dove, I have used "factor" as a translation for *die Sache* rather than "thing" in order to maintain Hegel's systematic distinction between *die Sache* and *das Ding*.
21. Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie*, (Berlin, 1969), p. 213. The task is "here to sublate the abstract will or, to produce it, as sublated, in the element of the universal being of recognition, this intersubjective (*geistige*) reality." *Ibid.*, p. 214.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 213. Hegel here uses the term *Person* much as he will later use that of *Mensch* to name the private man of the System of Needs.

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differentiate itself as a system of social production: for only when commodity circulation has posited abstract need by realizing *need as abstract for itselfness in universal exchange* can the process of production break through the limit of the *self-objectification of consciousness* and become the industrial labor process producing commodities for the market.[23]

Yet, just when the already established sphere of commodity circulation is now being reproduced through the system of production, the young Hegel suddenly introduces Abstract Right, breaking open the context of Civil Society, and reintroducing the formality of the willing individual.[24] Under the aegis of the movement to connect the abstract production process with the concrete needs of the individual,[25] Hegel goes one step farther than in the *System der Sittlichkeit* to undermine the developing relationship of the System of Needs. For here, *property* emerges upon the reduction of production to the self-objectification of consciousness of subjective Spirit,[26] *as well as* upon the reduction of an *existing* commodity exchange to simple contract, where the recognition of abstract need no longer is a factor.[27] The identification of the quality of the product as an object of production with the designation of the individual worker in relation to *his* labor (which already appeared as the basis of *property* in the *System der Sittlichkeit*) is now joined by the abstraction of an exchange embodying "the same externalization (*Entäusserung*)"[28] of the presupposed individual, in order to posit the relations of Abstract Right.

The *Jenaer Realphilosophie's* genesis of the *Person, property,* and *contract* thus annihilates both the social determining of the laboring act and that specific intersubjective character of commodity exchange which has allowed the process of social production (*gesellschaftliche Arbeit*) to first emerge.

The upshot of these early unresolved attempts is that the young Hegel has effectively

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23. At the level of *subjective Spirit* within the *Jenaer Realphilosophie* work "is the *self-objectification of consciousness.* However, in the element of universality it becomes an abstract laboring. . . Since labor takes place for need as abstract being-for-self, so is this laboring itself abstract." *Ibid.*, p. 214.

24. In *Theory and Practice* Habermas incorrectly describes this process. According to his account of this section of the *Jenaer Realphilosophie.* "Only when the *division of labor* has produced abstract labor, and the *commercial exchange* has produced abstract enjoyment, when both make possible the labor of all for the satisfaction of the needs of all, does *contract* become the principle of bourgeois commerce." Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973), p. 187. What Habermas refuses to recognize is that *social labor* and *commercial exchange* do not originally stand side by side like his categories of *labor* and *interaction.* It is through the specification of commodity circulation that the process of production is first posited. Both the *Philosophy of Right* and *Capital* develop the System of Needs in this manner.

25. "A movement must now take place between these various abstractly produced objects whereby they are once again related to *concrete* needs, that is, to the needs of an individual." Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie,* p. 215.

26. Subjective Spirit is here referred to as Hegel develops it in the *Jenaer Realphilosophie,* and not as it finally appears within the *Encyclopedia.*

27. "Here the accidentality of the taking of possession is sublated: I have everything through *labor* and through *exchange* in the being of recognition. . . The spring, the source of property is here that of labor, my *act* itself—immediate self and being of recognition, *Ground*. . . I have *willed* in exchange, posited my factor as value, that is to say, an inward movement, an internal act, as labor is submerged in being; (it is in both cases) the *same externalization*. . . a) I make myself immediately into a thing, a form that is being, in labor. b) I just as much externalize this my determinate being, make it alien to me and yet maintain myself therein. For even there I intuit my existing guaranty." *Ibid.*, p. 217.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

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demonstrated at his own expense the necessity of a demarcation of the realms of Abstract Right and Civil Society.

In the *Philosophy of Right* this radical separating finally becomes an acknowledged theme, with the result that all reference to any individual willing independent of the self-distinguishing of the System of Needs is at last excluded from the determination of the social labor process. Although the temptation may seem inescapable to make the *Person* constitutive of the bourgeois, *property* the basis of the commodity, and *formative action* (*Formierung*) the essence of labor, the mature Hegel emphatically removes these moments of Abstract Right from *all* involvement in the specification of the system of production. This critical transformation in the conception of the bourgeois society marks the passage beyond the unresolved tension in the social theory of the young Hegel, just as it marks a final preparation for Marx's thematization of the concept of capital. All the same, Lukács' *The Young Hegel* does not begin to extend its reach this far, even though its announced project would demand at least this last precision.

Without going into a detailed analysis of the *Philosophy of Right's* argument for the System of Needs, it will here suffice to fill this gap by indicating the special formality that excludes the determinations of Abstract Right from the realm of social production.

First and foremost, the *Person* is both in itself and in its relation to externality incompatible with the individuation constitutive of the System of Needs.

As the singular form of freedom in its pure being-for-self,[29] the Person is the completely abstract willing that has its particular content not within itself, but in an external immediately given factor (*Sache*), which exists for it as the simple receptacle of its will.[30] The particularity of the individual falls asunder from this determining, and the process of the Person is thus in principle entirely indifferent to Need and its satisfaction.[31]

The complete rightlessness of the factor furthermore eliminates any talk of interaction with an object *already* related to the will *and* need of others.[32] This is not altered by the fact that in his domination of the factor, the Person is self-related only because other Persons recognize the objective existence of his will in his subsumption of this pure external thing.[33] The reciprocal recognition of this relation neither informs the Person's act upon the factor, nor does it constitute an *existing* social structure which posits the individual in his free personality as a self-differentiation of the whole. Abstract Right cannot encompass such a *social* process which is central to

29. "in personality it is of myself alone that I am aware. A person is a unit of freedom aware of its sheer independence." Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (New York, 1967), p. 235.

30. "488. Mind, in the immediacy of its self-secured liberty, is an individual. . . a *person*, in whom the inward sense of this freedom, as in itself still abstract and empty, has its particularity and fulfillment not yet on its own part, but on an external *thing*." Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, translated by W. Wallace and A.V. Miller, (Oxford, 1973), p. 244.

31. "Since, in personality, particularity is not present as freedom, everything which depends on particularity is here a matter of indifference." Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 235.

32. Through *contract* the factor does acquire internally the quality of being related to other free wills. This takes place, however, only within *contract*, which itself depends upon the particular act of the single will for its existence.

33. "491. The thing is the *mean* by which the extremes meet in one. These extremes are the persons who, in the knowledge of their identity as free, are simultaneously mutually independent." Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 244.

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the determining of the system of production, and which is first realized at the level of the self-distinguishing of Ethical Life (*Sittlichkeit*).

The correlative determinateness of *property* is tainted by the same formality. As Hegel writes, "The rational of property is to be found not in the satisfaction of needs but in the supersession of the pure subjectivity of personality."[34] The object of property is, as such, entirely indifferent to production, exchange and consumption. Accordingly, all reference to the different value determinations which characterize the commodity are in principle excluded.[35]

The relationship of property has nothing more to say than that the Person has made his free will objective in the possession of a factor.[36] Those who affirm the right to equality in the amount or type of property have missed this point just as much as those (including none other than the young Hegel and the young Marx) who would introduce the property determination within a realm of commodity relations.[37]

Given the great importance of not thus conflating the Person with the bourgeois, and property with the commodity, it is still in specifying the abstractness of formative action (*Formierung*) that Hegel makes most obvious how the demarcation of Abstract Right from Civil Society has placed the determining of the labor process beyond the self-objectification of a given self-conscious individual and into the realm of interaction. This is all the more true since here Hegel gives precisely that process of externalization which the young Marx would later use as the touchstone for his unsuccessful determination of the system of production, and which Lukács would then pick up as the basis of Subject-Object *Entäusserung*. The difference in Hegel's intention, however, is immediately clear—for he refuses to call this formative action *labor*, and instead shows how it is *not* a labor process of the System of Needs.

"When I impose a form on something, the thing's determinate character as mine acquires an independent externality and ceases to be restricted to my presence here and now and to the direct presence of my awareness and will. To impose a form on a thing...implies a union of subject and object, although it varies endlessly with the qualitative character of the objects and the variety of subjective aims."[38]

Such determinateness is not only indifferent to all relation of need and its satisfaction, but entirely removed from any context within which the thing that is worked over has in itself a relatedness to other subjects or within which the formed product has an immediately social character. The Person who here transforms the factor (*Sache*) is not engaging in the satisfaction of human needs in a system of universal interdependence. And the product which emerges as the indifferent objectivity of his will has no quality which can stamp it as a commodity.

The *Formierung* of the subject by himself in no way escapes this formality either. The Person's working upon his physical and spiritual capacities to cast them in the

34. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 235.

35. So "subsistence is not the same as possession and belongs to another sphere, i.e. to civil society." *ibid.*, p. 44.

36. "But I as free will am an object to myself in what I possess and thereby also for the first time am an actual will, and this is the aspect which constitutes the category of *property*, the true and right factor in possession." *Ibid.*, p. 42.

37. Hegel criticizes the Jacobin demand on this basis: "Of course men are equal, but only *qua* persons...But this equality is something apart from the fixing of particular amounts, from the question of how much I own. From this point of view it is false to maintain that justice requires everyone's property to be equal,...since right is that which remains indifferent to particularity." *Ibid.*, p. 237.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

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form of the factor and make his own subjective possibility an external reality where his will is recognized[39]—this transformation stands entirely outside the self-determining of the private man of Civil Society, who acquires universal needs and skills in the earning of his satisfaction within a network of commodity exchange. That the ability (*Vermögen*) of the Person takes the shape of the factor in no way places it in relation to need and will in general, as is the case with the *commodity*, labor power.

When these distinctions are completely grasped, the departure from the problematic of the young Hegel has been accomplished, even if only through a negative characterization of social production. To come to the positive determining of that sphere of interaction, however, it is necessary to enter the immanent process of the System of Needs. Only in this way will the promise of Lukács' *The Young Hegel* be realized, and *Capital* provided with a sure foundation.

39. "57. . . It is only through the development of his own body and mind, essentially through his self-consciousness's apprehension of itself as free, that he takes possession of himself and becomes his own property and no one else's. This taking possession of oneself is the translation into actuality of what one is according to one's concept, i.e. a potentiality, capacity, potency. In that translation one's self-consciousness for the first time becomes established as one's own, as one's object also and distinct from self-consciousness pure and simple, and thereby capable of taking the form of a 'thing'." *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

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REVIEWS:

Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood. *The Reality of Ethnomethodology*. John Wiley and Sons: New York, 1975. 295 plus x pages.

In becoming an indispensable advisory branch of the administered society of the post-World War II era, sociology prospered beyond its wildest dreams. By providing the bureaucracy with that readily processable information without which social control becomes chaotic and counterproductive, objectivistic social science compensated for its paucity of significant theoretical accomplishments through the success and prestige that befell those who could show their usefulness in the marketplace. But what appeared as the long-awaited take-off of sociology as a rigorous objectivistic science soon showed itself to be a round-trip flight of the proverbial owl of Minerva. The hour of its greatest success coincided with the realization of its incipient obsolescence.

As Marcuse showed almost half a century ago,[1] the rise of sociology as a science corresponds with the end of the ascending phase of entrepreneurial capitalism and the beginning of that social and political crisis which foreshadowed its historical decline. The historicity of objectivistic sociology, therefore, is to be located in the need of entrepreneurial capitalism to understand and effectively deal with the increasing internal socio-political turmoil resulting from the correlative intensification of its cyclic regulatory economic crises. It is ironic that objectivistic sociology fully blossomed only in the post-World War II period, *after* monopoly capitalism had almost fully displaced its entrepreneurial phase, thus providing social tools rendered increasingly more obsolete by the changes in the objective socio-historical conditions for which they were designed.

In reducing the social dimension to its quantifiable components, objectivistic sociology could provide reliable information "only as long as the great masses of the population remain (or are reputed to remain) essentially passive"[2] and their behavior follows the logic of the "things" to which people are reified within the socio-economic system. Social conflicts in the pre-monopoly capitalist phase can be broadly seen as dysfunctions generated through the clashing of objective interests determined by the agents' location within the process of social production and reproduction. Objectivistic sociology is adequate to its task of elaborating the determining parameters of these conflicts as long as this state of affairs persists, i.e., as long as the problem of social order is reducible to controlling this type of objective social conflict. But the logic of this social process leads to its necessary dissolution through class struggle, the advent of monopolies, and increasingly more severe economic crises, *unless* the process itself is qualitatively changed. The restructuring of the productive process and the introduction of massive state intervention between the two World Wars, however, changed the logic of the system.[3] Monopoly capitalism and state penetration into all

1. Herbert Marcuse, "Zur Kritik der Soziologie," *Die Gesellschaft*, Vol. VIII (1931), pp. 270-280.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London, 1971), p. 428.

3. The *political* function of changes in the production process such as the introduction of the assembly line, has been well documented. Cf. Mario Tronti, "Workers and Capital," *Telos* 14 (Winter, 1972), pp. 25-62. The politicization of the division of labor has also received much attention: cf. Stephen A. Marglin, "What Do Bosses Do? Part I," *Review of Radical Political Economy*, 6:4 (Winter, 1974); and "What Do Bosses Do? Part II," *Review of Radical Political*

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facets of everyday life stalemated class politics by integrating traditional internal opposition as the regulatory mechanism of a system which could no longer rely on a disappearing market, or on the law of supply and demand based on historically extinct autonomous producers and consumers. In successfully integrating traditional oppositional forces into the new logic of capitalist development, however, monopoly capitalism did not eliminate its fundamental contradictions but merely redistributed conflictuality from the productive process to the cultural dimension.

The development of one-dimensional society meant the *instrumentalization* of objective class conflict as regulatory mechanisms, but not their abolition. As Adorno indicated, this process of social integration led to the internalization of repressive mechanisms controlling those drives which not only could not be satisfied within the new context, but could not even be expressed in the form of legitimate claims, with the result that the psychological dimension became the new repository of repressed conflicts and contradictions.[4] The problem of social order, regulated at the macro-level of conflicts among constituted social groups, becomes explosive at the individual level where contradictions between unsatisfiable needs and artificially generated consumption now obtains. It is in dealing with this new state of affairs that objectivistic sociology (and its often unrecognized but latently omnipresent adversary, traditional Marxism) reaches its limits. At this point, theoretical efforts seeking to deal with the maintenance of social order or the qualitative alteration of social relations must necessarily penetrate and articulate the logic of the *subjective* dimension. In focusing on this, ethnomethodology comes about as a response not only to new historical developments, but to a whole new set of previously unasked questions. Thus, ethnomethodology is *potentially* both the sociology of 1984 as well as the heir to traditional Marxism. Yet, it is still too confused and undefined to permit definitive evalution. This is why preliminary synthesizing works such as Mehan's and Wood's *The Reality of Ethnomethodology* deserve close examination and constructive criticism.

Mehan's and Wood's version of ethnomethodology, as with every other adolescent, has a problem of identity. It resents its family origins and seeks to dissociate itself from them: allegedly, "sociology and ethnomethodology are separate enterprises, engaging different phenomena" (6). It rejects all traditional associations: it is "not *a* body of findings, nor *a* method, nor *a* theory, nor *a* world view" (3). It wants to be a form of life. As an adolescent, however, it cannot do this on its own and needs parental support to sustain its rebellious undertakings. Thus, although "ethnomethodology can be an act of rebellion," it goes on speaking "within the scientific idiom" (205): Mehan and Wood see no need to "deny the scientific method" (211). Ethnomethodology is presented as a meta-theory to social science in the same way that sociology could be seen as relating to psychology, psychology to physiology, physiology to biology, biology to chemistry, and chemistry to physics (4). But, traditionally, in the hierarchy of

Economy, 7:1 (Spring, 1975); André Gorz, "Technical Intelligence and the Capitalist Division of Labor," *Telos* 12 (Summer, 1972), pp. 27-41; and Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York, 1974).

4. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Sociology and Psychology," *New Left Review* 46 (November-December, 1967), pp. 67-80; and *New Left Review* 47 (January-February, 1968), pp. 79-97. This, of course, is the very problematic which Marcuse articulated in *Eros and Civilization* and *One-Dimensional Man*. It is precisely this state of affairs which generates the kind of problematic that behaviorist sociology seeks to articulate—which also accounts for its success. This point is extensively elaborated by Melvin L. Oliver, "The Potential Impact of Behaviorism and Ethnomethodology on Academic Sociology," unpublished paper (1975).

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disciplines, such a place is precisely the one usually reserved for theology, metaphysics, or mysticism, which was vacated in the 20th century (or left to personal whim) since it could not be dealt with in the same way as other "scientific" endeavors. In aspiring to this position while retaining its "scientific" status, ethnomethodology presents itself as both theory and meta-theory with the unfortunate result that it cannot be either one: as one form of life among many (31) it cannot authoritatively deal with that very framework which specifies ethnomethodology itself as a form of life, thus shipwrecking in a hopeless relativism. This also prevents it from generating any valid systematic theoretical claims since forms of life deal with activities not reducible to purely conceptual and abstract accounts. Ultimately, Mehan's and Wood's ethnomethodology not only leaves no room for theory, but also fails altogether to vindicate that *subjectivity* and *intersubjectivity* whose primacy in traditional religions has historically made them immune from scientific attack.

The problem is that this version of ethnomethodology *lacks a foundation.* Compounded with a behavioristic conception of language, this lack of foundation results in a mysticism which precludes any systematic articulation of ethnomethodology other than as "a collection of practices similar in purpose to the practices artists and craftsmen teach and use" (238). Thus, Mehan and Wood end up having to acknowledge the very writing of their book as an act of hypocrisy (223) whose only possible justification is pedagogic and therapeutic: theoretical poison is permissible only as medicine to cure the Western disease of abstraction. In order to understand how Mehan and Wood manage to paint themselves into such a corner, it is necessary to briefly examine Wittgenstein's philosophy which they uncritically hypostatize to the level of sociology (32) and which not only fails to provide the needed foundation, but also generates scores of extraneous problems.

Contrary to standard philosophical interpretations of Wittgenstein as the father of the *Wiener Kreis* or as the originator of analytic philosophy, Mehan and Wood see him as concerned primarily with the *practical* side of life. This account, which in its most extreme versions presents Wittgenstein as being privately a socialist,[5] although much more credible than usual accounts, is still inadequte and fails to locate Wittgenstein's problematic within the general socio-historical context from which it arose. In this respect, it is ironic that Mehan and Wood "refute" Habermas on the ground that, in order to use his method, "one must first study many recondite texts. Kant, Hegel, Marx and Husserl are preliminary requirements for the 'discipline of trained thought'." Mehan's and Wood's method, on the other hand, "requires the gathering and analysis of materials which are 'objective' in their first appearance and which include the researcher as a constituent part." Thus, "within the English-speaking world... a method based on 'data' will prove more useful" (215). What is forgotten is that the sociological Wittgenstein they recycle in order to avoid having to plow through German Idealism and its outcome, which enables them to rush to that "data" so much in demand in American academic markets, presupposes precisely the same tradition and problematic as German Idealism. Wittgenstein's quandaries (which are also Mehan's and Wood's—although only part of a much larger assortment) can only be understood if seen as tentative answers to questions which

5. The basis for these claims usually is Wittgenstein's great respect for manual labor, his asceticism, and an exploratory visit to the USSR in 1935 undertaken in connection with the possibility of eventually settling there. Cf. John Moran, "Wittgenstein and Russia," *New Left Review* 73 (May-June, 1972), pp. 85-96.

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Wittgenstein shared not only with Husserl, Scheler, and both the Heidelberg and Marburg schools of neo-Kantianism,[6] but also with Hegelian Marxists such as Lukács, Gramsci and Korsch—and even the subsequent members of the Frankfurt School.

As Janik and Toulmin have shown, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was an attempt to answer the problems associated with the cultural crisis which engulfed Europe before World War I, and especially felt in that middle-European milieu of which Wittgenstein was such a "representative figure."[7] That laceration between life and culture which is the *leitmotif* of Lukács' *Die Seele und die Formen*, is also the focus of Husserl's phenomenology, where the separation of science from its originally determining teleology sets the stage for the crisis of European science and of humanity, and of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* whose main goal is not so much the philosophical delineation of a rigorously founded representational language, but the rescue of the ethical dimension from the disquieting implications of ungrounded speculative thought and its various philosophical manifestations. This is why, in attempting to have the *Tractatus* published, Wittgenstein wrote that "the *book's point is an ethical one*... My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have *not* written. And *it is precisely this second part that is the important one.*"[8] What is most important to Wittgenstein is precisely that which, in the closing sentence of the *Tractatus*, is presented as "what we cannot speak about" and which, consequently, "we must consign to silence."[9]

The thrust of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* is thus twofold: on the one hand, to vindicate the ethical dimension from the contingencies of the cultural disintegration of his times, and, on the other, to provide a rigorous representational language upon whch to ground intellectual discourse thereby extending the salvaging operation from ethics also to the disintegrating culture. This second project—which was also Frege's and Russell's, and is usually seen as Wittgenstein's by his Cambridge followers[10]—he soon discovered to be an impossible one. As he put it, "In the *Tractatus*, I was unclear about 'logical analysis' and ostensive demonstration. I used to think that there was a direct link between language and Reality."[11] And even in the *Tractatus* itself, as Toulmin indicates, the emphasis is on representations as *Darstellungen* rather than as *Vorstellungen*,[12] i.e., on representations as *constituted* entities rather than as reproductions of sensory experience. Thus, it is not surprising that in the *Philosophical Investigations* he came to recognize "all the multifarious ways in which 'forms of life' create legtimate contexts for 'language games' and how these in turn delimit the scope and boundaries of the sayable."[13] Having found the problem of a univocal relation between language and reality unsolvable, Wittgenstein focused on the forms of life—

6. For an excellent account of the neo-Kantian problematic, see Andrew Arato, "The Neo-Idealist Defense of Subjectivity," *Telos* 21 (Fall, 1974), pp. 108-161.

7. Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin, *Wittgenstein's Vienna* (New York, 1973), p. 237.

8. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Briefe an Ludwig von Ficker* (Salzburg, 1969), p. 35. Quoted in Janik and Toulmin, p. 192.

9. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, edited A.J. Ayer (London, 1961), pp. 150-151.

10. Cf. K.T. Fann, *Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy* (Berkeley, 1969), p. 6. According to Fann: "It is quite clear that Wittgenstein's order of investigation is thus: from the nature of logic to the nature of language and then to the nature of the world." Unfortunately, the recently published correspondence of Wittgenstein clearly shows such not to have been the case.

11. Wittgenstein to Waismann, July 1, 1932, as quoted in Janik and Toulmin, *op.cit.*, p. 222.

12. Janik and Toulmin, *op.cit.*, p. 183.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

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which in Mehan and Wood become the equivalent of Schutz' multiple realities minus the commonsense everyday world—as the foundation not only of language, but also for those values which he had initially sought to salvage from the vicissitudes of speculative thought. He found it impossible to hold to a "hard and fast contrast between literal, descriptive utterances (language as *Gleichnis*) and ritual or performative speech (language as *Handlung*);" thus, when all was said and done, "he had dismantled also the very criterion by appeal to which he had drawn his original absolute distinction between 'sayable' facts, which language can encompass, and 'transcendental' values, which must in the nature of things remain forever inexpressible."[14] The result is a hopeless cultural relativism where the personal salvation sought by Wittgenstein becomes entirely a function of living through the values embedded within whatever culture one happens to find oneself.

The resulting relativism, however, was a consequence of his failure to adequately thematize the relation between language and reality, the *Darstellungen* and the *Vorstellungen*, which, formulated differently, was the general problem of Husserl's phenomenology and of the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic of Lukács, Korsch and Gramsci. What is missing in Wittgenstein, which leads him to his conservative resignation, is the notion of *labor* as the creative process whereby humankind creates itself, its language and institutions, and society in general. Wittgenstein's philosophical stance is *passive* and *contemplative*; hence, according to Lukács' precise definition of the term, it is *bourgeois par excellence*. The concrete totality takes on the character of a multitude of *forms of life* having their own structures and logic which are impenetrable to outside judgments. The lack of the constitutive function of social labor as teleological and creative human activity denigrates subjects to the passive level of puppets unable to attain any radically critical view of their society and, therefore, unable to collectively redirect the course of their lives and culture. Thus, the very problem of alienation ends up redefined, as in Mehan and Wood, as a discontinuity between one's experience and a corresponding conceptual framework (217). But in order to make this altogether reasonable claim, Mehan and Wood need a theory very similar to Lukács' account of objective consciousness which can establish a necessary connection between certain experiences and correlative conceptual structures. Of course, Lukács' inability to concretely articulate his notion of 'ascribed consciousness,' which would have validated a political program independently of any complementary empirically given consciousness, eventually led him to reject his own version of the theory of alienation and the whole conceptual framework of *History and Class Consciousness*.[15] Mehan and Wood are not even aware that a problem exists which cannot even be raised by the problematic of "forms of life": Wittgenstein's

14. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

15. Furio Cerutti, among others, has argued that the notion of "ascribed consciousness" is of Weberian or neo-Kantian origins and, therefore, foreign to the Hegelian framework of *History and Class Consciousness* (see his "Hegel, Lukács and Korsch: On the Emancipatory Significance of the Dialectic in Critical Marxism," in this issue of *Telos*). But the Hegelian interpretation of Marxism is valid *only* for the entrepreneurial stage of capitalism. In fact, as Cerutti himself indicates, "ascribed consciousness" is introduced by Lukács to salvage the emancipatory elements of Hegelian Marxism at a time when its viability seemed to be rapidly slipping. Given the previously outlined genesis of the primacy of the subjective in a context where the totalization projected by Lukács and other Hegelian Marxists in the early 1920s is objectively unrealizable, "ascribed consciousness" is not only phenomenologically necessary, but also socio-historically groundable within the kind of Hegelianized political economy outlined by Cerutti. For a broader discussion of this problem, see my "Korsch in Spain," *New German Critique* 6 (Fall, 1975).

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behaviorism is committed to reconstructing language games in such a way that any discontinuity between experience and language is difficult to formulate. Only a phenomenological account can properly deal with the relation between activities and corresponding forms of consciousness, thus simultaneously salvaging the Lukácsian problematic as well as any account of alienation, such as Mehan's and Wood's, presupposing a similar relation.

Husserl's phenomenology was conceived as that science of the life-world which, by thematizing constitutive human operations (whose purpose is to process living experience into ideal forms susceptible to scientific articulation) would *ground* all sciences and reinstate that *telos* of Western civilization, the loss of which results precisely in the kind of relativism Wittgenstein ultimately found himself in, and whose objective consequences were Nazism, Fascism and, after his death, the atomic bomb. The Husserlian epoché was meant to isolate phenomena so that, through the phenomenological reduction, it would be possible to reconstruct the constitutive human operations which brought it about and *subsequently* made appear, in the naturalistic or mundane attitude, a kind of second nature, pregiven, and obtaining in a dimension independent of human intervention. In liquefying the phenomena into objectified human activity, phenomenology as the science of constitutive human operations would both rediscover the lost *telos* of Western civilization as well as indicate ways to prevent the relativism and objectivism resulting from the naturalistic attitude. The problem which Husserl did not live to solve, however, is precisely that what he was articulating was not purely a *philosophical* issue, but rather the fundamental *social* and *political* problem of capitalism: the logic of commodity-fetishism. It is unnecessary at this point to further analyze the Hegelian-Marxist problematic. For purposes of this discussion, it is sufficient to indicate that there were other possible solutions to Wittgenstein's problematic, which did not entail the hopeless relativism of his *Philosophical Investigations* or the high price of uncritically accepting whatever happens to constitute one's "natural" life-form, i.e., the forfeiture of any possible self-transcendence.

In translating Wittgenstein's later philosophy into ethnomethodology, Mehan and Wood dogmatically reiterate, without any substantive justification, Wittgenstein's dubious solutions in a socio-historical context where they have long since been transcended by the Marxist and the phenomenological way of posing the same problem. Furthermore, the transplant into ethnomethodology of Wittgenstein's later philosophy is not only unnecessary, but it creates problems altogether extraneous to *ethnomethodology understood as a rigorous subjective sociology.*

Mehan's and Wood's translation of *Lebensformen* into multiple realities, of which ethnomethodology is only one, is carried out through an interesting but hardly original argument concerning the incorrigibility of knowledge: "each reality reflexively proves its facts as absolute" (16). As coherent bodies of knowledge, these realities generate observation languages which, indistinguishable from theoretical languages, can never generate any counter-factual evidence, thus ruling out the possibility of corrigibility. Following Wittgenstein, however, Mehan and Wood do not put forth a standard *epistemological* argument, but prefer to ground their realities on sets of experiences. But this immensely complicates things. The philosophers of science can rely on a pre-categorical or pre-formal dimension to choose among competing theories or competing bodies of knowledge, but, since Mehan's and Wood's realities do not allow for any such privileged precategorical dimension, it is a mystery how one reality can penetrate another. According to them, "every reality is equally real. No single

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reality contains more truth than any other. Furthermore, they reject Schutz' view that "the reality of everyday life is the *one* paramount reality" consisting "of a number of presuppositions or assumptions, which include the assumption of a tacit, taken for granted world; an assumed practical interest in that world; and an assumption that the world is intersubjective." They "do not wish to call one or another reality paramount" (31). But this route successfully eliminates all means of explaining how "radically different realities can be penetrated" (29). From the example that they provide, it is clear that the penetration occurs through the imitation of the experiences constituting other life-forms. The process is *not* a conceptual one, however, since, for them, "one reality cannot investigate another without running it through its own knowledge and reasoning system" (70) and "any person looking at another implies... the imposition of one reality on another" (70). Thus, the penetration must take place at the level of *activities* through *imitation*. This is why they write that: "to become the phenomenon means to do reality as its members do" (227) and that imitating the participants "will display the phenomenon" (229). In fact, for them, "although two actions occur at different times and places, through separate bodies and mechanisms, they may be the same" (187). But the very possibility of this imitation and identity presupposes some sort of common reality within which recognition is possible. Thus, Mehan's and Wood's own arguments contradict their uncritically accepted Wittgensteinian relativism.

The problem of multiple realities, even if formulated in Wittgenstein's terms, is a crucial one and can be seen as corresponding to Marx's notion of "consciousness."[16] In fact, for Marx, what constitutes a class is that a group of people share certain sets of experiences: "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interest and their culture from those of other classes and places them in opposition to them, they constitute a class."[17] From this, however, Marx does not separate the various consciousnesses in such a way that no common denominator can ever mediate between them. *Social* being is-precategorical, and *social consciousness* (as an expression thereof) is a categorical moment of it. False consciousness, or the problem of cultural hegemony, takes on in Marx the same character of alienation as in Mehan and Wood, for whom alienation is the deprivation of one group's language by another group (217). Yet, where Marx goes on to examine the socio-historical determinations which bring about this state of affairs (the division of labor, exploitation, class-domination, etc.), Mehan and Wood remain satisfied with exploring how "ethnomethodology displays the everyday practices of this alienation" (218). This display is certainly important, but only as a *moment* of a much broader political project whereby the *recognition* of alienation, as in Lukács, already means having achieved what ultimately decides the class struggle.[18] Mehan and Wood hint as much: "If the proletariat could be exhorted to speak as Marx proposed, after a cataclysm of class speaking, stratification would end" and "people would once more be reality participants" (222). In posing the whole problematic in terms of language, however, not only do they mislead others, but they mislead themselves as well.

While the emphasis on the subjective dimension that ethnomethodology deals with is crucial for any Marxism that seeks to be relevant in the context of monopoly

16. Janik and Toulmin, *op.cit.*, p. 274.
17. Marx and Engels, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *Selected Works*, Vol. I (Moscow, 1962), p. 334.
18. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (London, 1971), p. 52.

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capitalism, by following Wittgenstein and almost exclusively dealing with language, Mehan and Wood come up with *prima facie* absurd conclusions that: Marx's "interpretation was not *about* the world" (211). Of course Marx's interpretation is about the world! What Mehan and Wood want to say is that Marx's theory was not *objectivistic* and consequently contains no antinomies between facts and values, subject and object, thinking and doing, etc. Similarly, their exhortation to "use Marx not to illuminate Marx but rather to reveal [one's] own practice of alienation" (218) is highly misleading. Certainly, the aim of studying Marx is not a scholastic fixation on Marx himself, but a better self-understanding. In fact, the only way Marx can become relevant to us, as Gramsci put it, is if he is seen as a moment in the development of that cultural consciousness which we inherit and which leads us to see history not solely as the domain of ideas, dates, and great individuals, but as the result of practical activity and its objective consequences.[19] This is not reducible to one's own "practices of alienation," although the latter are definitely part of that framework developed by Marx as a means to overcome the economic and political contradictions which necessitate those practices. The overemphasis on the personal dimension in Mehan and Wood attempts to compensate for the absence of any *genuine living subjectivity* in their work. This explains the unresolved relativism in the account of multiple realities and the apparently contradictory claim that the natural sciences escape this relativism. This is allegedly due to the fact that "sociology's measurement is based on indicators and a process of abstraction that differs fundamentally from the measurement practices of the natural and life sciences" (71). Following Wittgenstein's behavioristic account of language, Mehan and Wood allow only for those sets of language games specifiable through determinate behavioral patterns. To the extent that the natural sciences seem to them as based on *univocally* determined "measurement practices," they are not subject to the same critique applied to the social sciences by Mehan and Wood. As already indicated, this way of posing the problem eventually leaves no room for theory. Thus, what determines a science is not the systematic nature of its theoretical endeavors meant to apprehend the world so as to be able to deal with it according to a prior, determining teleology. Rather, science is seen as simply a set of systematic practices. Since Mehan and Wood have bought lock, stock and barrel the scientistic ideology that reduces scientificity to the application of a mythical "scientific method" (211) which they think natural scientists really use, natural science for them has escaped the problems of the social sciences. But, as Husserl has shown, all measurement in the natural sciences is *indirect* and already presupposes that processing of *Vorstellungen* into *Darstellungen* which it is the task of phenomenology to scientifically articulate. Thus, in order to measure an entity as simple as that of length, already presupposes the reduction of the phenomenal world to ideal forms which, unlike the phenomenal world itself, are capable of being mathematized.[20] Furthermore, the kind of epistemological anarchism advocated by Feyerabend and the Left Popperians (quoted, but not heeded by Mehan and Wood) introduces into the philosophy of science the very theme of multiple realities meant to guarantee the validity of *the* accepted scientific theory whose empirical content is negatively determined by what it falsifies. The point is that the problematic of multiple realities also applies to the natural sciences once they are no longer seen as

19. Antonio Gramsci, "Il Nostro Marx," in *Il Grido del Popolo* (May 4, 1918). Now in English in *History, Philosophy and Culture in the Young Gramsci* (St. Louis, 1976).

20. This thesis, of course, is best developed in Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, translated by David Carr (Evanston, Ill., 1970).

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simply a set of practices, but as part of a socio-historical project whose teleology they embody, only to subsequently lose it in that crisis of the European sciences and humanity still very much with us today.

Of course, Mehan and Wood are correct in at least one important respect: subjectivity always manifests itself in *activity*. This does not entail, however, that it can be *reduced* wholly into these manifestations. To take this activity, as Mehan and Wood do, as the absolute starting point of a rigorously founded sociology confuses the product with the process and the method of exposition with that of investigation. As Marx put it in his often-quoted passage where he contrasts the bee to the architect,[21] what makes human activity superior to mere animal activity is that the former realizes a consciously planned task, i.e., it is a teleological objectification of a subjectivity whose logical priority is precisely what makes that activity *human*. The phenomena with which social research must begin, of course, are always *products*—which explains why Husserl concerned himself so much with the epoché and the reduction whereby these products could be seen as the results of a teleological process. This does not mean, however, that the scientific exposition must mirror its genesis. A science claiming to merely mirror the given would only intellectually legitimate whatever practices it studies: it would be a classical case of what Adorno calls "identity theory" which he sees not only as an expression of *bourgeois* practices, but as the cancer of all Western thought.[22] The function of scientific exposition (unlike scientific *inquiry* which must reconstruct the genesis of the phenomenon from the phenomenon with the help of theory) is to conceptually articulate the phenomenon through abstractions so constituted as to function in *praxis* (distinguishable from mere activity precisely by this theoretical determination) as *mediations*,[23] in the process of attaining that human emancipation which originally generated the very *project* of Western science. From this perspective, Mehan and Wood fail to provide a meaningful alternative to objectivistic social science. They condone Zimmerman's and Wilson's version of ethnomethodology seeking the "discovery of *invariant empirical laws*" (151), and endorse "the model of the reality constructor" to enable "actual social scenes to be examined at a greater depth than is usual in sociological field studies" so to investigate "particular scenes in order to *see general* features" (106-107). Their complete collapse in identity theory, however, is complete when they equate "Being with Truth" (199). Once again, a fertile intuition falls flat because of a failure to theoretically develop it. Aware of the traditional shortcomings of materialism and idealism (which are

21. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (Moscow, n.d.), p. 178: "A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. He not only effects a change of form in the material on which he works, but he also realizes a purpose of his own that gives the law to his modus operandi, and to which he must subordinate his will."

22. Theodor W. Adorno, "Fortschritt," in *Stichworte. Kritische Modelle* (Frankfurt am Main, 1969), pp. 48-50. The theme of "identity theory," of course, is a recurrent one in all of Adorno's post-World War II works.

23. This account clarifies the status of the reconstruction of the historicity of sociology outlined in the opening pages. It is not a purely objectivistic account meant to mirror the history of sociology, but, rather, a *mediation* meant to facilitate the creation of an emancipatory sociology. As to the question of its truth or falsity, it has nothing to do with whether this account captures the actual genesis (since, according to the theory which generates it, it certainly does, thus validating it in a trivial sense) but it refers to whether it actually facilitates the creation of an emancipatory sociology adequate to the historical problems posed by monopoly capitalism.

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re-baptized as "the determinist tradition" and "constitutive Being" for no apparent reason) as reverse sides of the same contemplative and passive consciousness, they seek to ground their account in those activities determining forms of life. But since the activities with which they deal are behaviorist reifications excluding any *active subjectivity*, they necessarily end up in a mysticism in which Being and Truth coincide. To the extent that Truth cannot be seen as including the unfulfilled projections of an active historical subjectivity which they *a priori* rule out, it necessarily collapses into Being in an empty tautology.

The identification of subjectivity with language games understood as behavioral patterns not only contaminates ethnomethodology with "identity theory," but also leads to other, more immediately embarassing consequences. Thus, an otherwise excellent attack on objectivistic social science includes a "refutation" of formal logic whose crudity would be incomprehensible independently of Mehan's and Wood's interpretation of all theories as language games reducible to behavioral patterns. Such an interpretation of logic necessarily takes on a psychologistic character that hardly any logician in the 20th century would accept. Aside from the fact that Mehan and Wood base their whole attack on formal logic on two *unpublished* manuscripts by a sociologist (or psychologist?) Howard Schwartz, the rejection of formal logic as "no more (or less) universally applicable than the Tarot, or astrology, or Yaqui sorcery" (66) is purely a result of their allowing no independent status to theory. Michael Kosok (whom they quote without, however, having understood) also rejects formal logic, but only in its claims to provide an *exhaustive* account of the structure of reasoning, and he goes on to show how formal logic is actually only a moment of dialectical logic.[24] Since formal logic deals *solely* with idealized forms, while people live in a world in which these forms occupy only a relatively small part, logic fails miserably when seen, as with Mehan and Wood, as a "form of life." Thus: "ethnomethodology has rejected formal logic as a model of action" (75). But logicians have hardly ever marketed their wares as models of action! From an excellent critique of objectivistic social science on the valid grounds that it uncritically assumes people to follow the canons of formal logic in their everyday interaction, it does not follow that formal logic is thereby a language game which can be legitimated if and only if people do play such a game in the same way that artists and craftsmen carry out their business.

One could go on and make similar points in regard to their treatment of the dialectic, "the hereneutical spiral," etc., but it would be redundant: the main problems should be clear by now. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that Mehan's and Wood's book will be read carefully by less sympathetic readers[25] and the only features noticed will be the superficial absurdities at the expense of the underlying crucial problematic. Yet, ethnomethodology *could* be rescued: it need not be seen as "Hollywood sociology" which, video-tape equipment in hand, confuses social theory with electronic instant replays. Ethnomethodology will either become *rigorous*

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24. Actually, Kosok makes his best case for this claim in an article that Mehan and Wood do *not* cite: "The Formalization of Hegel's Dialectical Logic," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, No. 4.

25. If there are any doubts about this, one need only consult the latest two reviews of Aaron Cicourel's *Theory and Method in a Study of Argentine Fertility* (New York, 1973), in *Contemporary Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (September, 1975). Whereas Larry L. Bumpass finds it outrageous and absurd, Peter K. Manning sees it as trivial. In both cases, Cicourel's main points are systematically ignored. It is unlikely that Mehan and Wood will be better received by their objectivistic peers.

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phenomenological sociology or it will be nothing. In order to displace the trivial investigative work carried out under the guise of objectivistic social science, ethnomethodology must fully digest the tradition whence it comes. With Husserl, the sociologist must become the "functionary of mankind"—a task which philosophers relinquished long ago. The discovery of one's own alienation—the alpha and omega of certain garden varieties of ethnomethodology—is not the end of social inquiry, but the beginning. Rather than wasting time with "zatocoding" or "enjambing," ethnomethodology must rigorously work out its theoretical foundations by rescuing Husserlian phenomenology from the idealist straitjacket into which it has been forced, and work out its full sociological implications.

What is phenomenological sociology? It is that *subjectivist* sociology which, taking the critique of the naturalistic attitude as the paradigm for the demystification of alienation, reification and commodity fetishism, works out the concrete mediations whereby true subjectivity can become a social reality by qualitatively altering present conditions in which "identity theory" as the fraud of equal exchange underlying all social relations reduces people to the status of mere things. It is a social science which, concerned with basic human operations, could eventually provide that foundation to all sciences which Husserl mistakenly ascribed to pure phenomenology as a result of his inability to push his work to the limits and historicize his own problematic. This should not be understood as an empty slogan, but as a program. In the present stage of monopoly capitalism, ethnomethodology cannot be allowed to become the new science of domination and subjective administration. Ethnomethodology must leave the Hollywood dreamworld of electronic gadgetry and subjective idealism to confront that social reality which ethnomethodologists accuse all other sociologists of miscomprehending. In other words, sociology must rediscover the axiological dimension of all human activity and become its concrete elaboration, even if, in the present social context, such a task entails running the risk of all critical efforts—i.e., that of fueling precisely what it seeks to change.

Paul Piccone

John O'Neill. *Making Sense Together: An Introduction to Wild Sociology.* Harper Torchbooks: New York, 1975. 83 plus ix pages. $1.95.

The tendency of social theorists to surround their rational kernels with mystifying if not mystical shells raises a dilemma for those who would review their work. One risks either discarding them unopened or adapting a sledgehammer approach which shatters the kernel and the shell without differentiation across the pages of an ultimately unedifying review. This review will be marked by that peculiar ostentation whereby the reviewer sets himself up as the guardian of the author's alleged better self and then turns better self against present product to let them fight it out for a few pages. Awkward though the stance may be, it is necessary; especially so when what appears to the reviewer as serious misjudgments in presentation threaten to undermine the work of an author who, in his better moments, seems to approach the concerns shared by this journal. In short, the kernel is well worth saving, even if the price is a bit of furious shell smashing. To the extent that it is still possible to distinguish fraternal

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criticism from sectarian fratricide (and the distinction may only be valid in a happier situation), it is hoped that what goes on here will be taken as the former.

The past few years have seen the transformation of the introduction of phenomenology into the social sciences from a primarily epistemological critique of methodological foundations to a research program claiming to be grounded on a basis of its own and designated by the term "ethnomethodology." The term refers not to a type of *social inquiry* but rather to what is claimed to be a phenomenon of *social existence:* the routine grounds of inference and action which guide the conduct of individuals in everyday social interactions.[1] The absence of a name for the discipline which is concerned with *ethnomethodologies* can be taken as evidence of a deeper confusion about the interests which guide research into this area in the first place. Unclear of the motives for beginning inquiry into these phenomena (it would seem that Husserl's reflections on the motivation for beginning phenomenology might be employed to a greater extent than has appeared to be the case), the endeavor has a tendency to lapse into a fact-gathering operation designed to unearth the "natural order" of society in a manner which maintains the same contemplative stance that has characterized previous ventures from Townsend to Parsons. Though the terminology may be different, the passionate faith that underneath the world of everyday life the legitimating blessing of "nature" may be glimpsed remains curiously unchanged. O'Neill's relationship to this project is ambivalent, alternately serving as its defender and, at his best (as the phrase goes), as one of its more perceptive critics.[2] In the relevant portion of *Making Sense Together* (pp. 39ff.), he seems to be trying to provide the study of ethnomethodologies with a rationale for beginning its inquiries by indicating the manner in which routine everyday activities first motivate theoretical reflection.[3]

The relevance of these concerns for critical social theory may not be immediately apparent, but I do think it could be argued (though not in this review) that much of what is now going on under the trademark of the "problem of grounding" in the work of Habermas and others could be approached on a level which would investigate the needs which motivate theorizing on something less celestial than "quasi-transcendental"[4] knowledge-constitutive interests. In his earlier work, O'Neill has explored these problems in an analysis which made use of Merleau-Ponty's notions of "institution" and "embodiment" as well as (though less directly) Marcuse's formulations of the erotic dimensions of embodiment—although on the latter point the unfortunate influence of Norman O. Brown tended to cloud things considerably. A significant notion, without which the present work can scarcely be understood, emerged from his critique of Habermas ("Can Phenomenology Be Critical?" SSK, pp. 221ff.) under the label "limited reflexivity." Although the essay in question is badly

1. Cf. Harold Garfinkel's comments on the origins of the term in Richard J. Hill and Kathleen Stones Crittenden, eds., *Proceedings of the Purdue Symposium on Ethnomethodology*, Institute Monograph No. 1, Institute for the Study of Social Change, Purdue University (1968), pp. 5ff.

2. In the former role, cf. his response to Alvin Gouldner in *Sociology as a Skin Trade* (hereafter SSK) (New York, 1972), pp. 209ff. In the latter role, cf. his contribution to the VIII World Congress of Sociology, Toronto, August, 1974.

3. This should be compared to the title essay of SSK which seems to be making the same point.

4. This formulation is employed by Habermas, as a "product of an embarrassment which points to more problems than it solves" in the new introduction to *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973). It seems that the notion of knowledge-constitutive interests might be posed on a more historically specific level, but this would demand a further definition of differing constellations of interests beyond those Habermas has used thus far.

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weakened by a failure to develop the promised confrontation between the limited reflexivity of the "body politic" and the "total reflexivity of absolute knowledge" (SSK, 226), the point that I take O'Neill to be making becomes considerably expanded and to some extent clarified by the present work. Absolute reflexivity, proclaiming itself as the sole Archimedian point from which critique may be mounted, falls into impotence because of its utter incoherence; in claiming to be free from all of the distortions which are inflicted by the idols of everyday reflection, it leaves itself in a position where no adjudication of its claims becomes possible (those who desire a more concise formulation of the argument may consult the third thesis on Feuerbach after making the appropriate substitutions for what is being attacked). Against the utopian claims of the "empire of method," O'Neill argues for an approach which will cling more closely to the conventional wisdom of everyday reason. The incoherence of absolute reflexivity as well as the irreparable formalism which haunts all such disembodied thought can only be overcome if the vertical aspirations of transcendental reflection are replaced by a notion of critique which conceives of itself as an effort to acquire, through a horizontal reflection on the unachieved critical efforts of previous generations, leverage against the present by subverting it with the repressed memories of its own past.[5] Against the hopes for an eventual sorting out of the pure pragmatics of communicative interaction, O'Neill argues that "...we need to remember that human speech has no absolute goal of rational clarification, of disbelief, and rejection of prejudice. Human speech, dialogue, and conversation seeks just as well acceptance, our understanding of what was already our belief, our native prejudice.... [W]e find meaning between words and sentences and men; there is nothing either in back of this or beyond it" (SSK, 236).

Though there is a tendency present, which presages certain problems of *Making Sense Together*, of rejecting Habermas' efforts in favor of arguments more suggestive than substantive (the passage quoted above seems plagued by the problems associated with any assertion that individuals today are the absolute masters of their fates; in fact, there *is* much behind language—money, violence, coercion, etc.), I think it should be clear that the distance from O'Neill's limited reflexivity to the Kraus-inspired model of criticism in *One Dimensional Man* or Adorno's merciless attack on Heidegger's violence towards German syntax is much smaller than may first meet the eye. All of these efforts assume a relationship between critic and audience that might better be analyzed using the categories of rhetoric than by attempting to construct an apriori capacity for critical reflection. These considerations, vague though they may be, constitute the real strengths of O'Neill's analysis: an examination of the way in which criticism partakes of an *immanent* ground in tradition and history might serve as a suggestive set of metaphors for understanding the specificity of political action. But there are also tendencies present in these notions as I have outlined them and as I feel O'Neill has presented them. Not the least important aspect of *Making Sense Together* is that it vividly indicates that these arguments lend

5. On this point cf. Samuel Weber's comments in his introduction to his translation of T.W. Adorno, *Prisms* (London, 1967), pp. 11-15. My comments here are also I hope in basic agreement with the point made by James Miller in his review of *Legitimation Crisis*, "Against Habermas, we might do well to reconsider Adorno's principles in *Negative Dialectics*. What the aim of emancipation requires is not transcendental grounding—it finds reason enough in the palpable inequities and injustices perpetrated by contemporary institutions" (*Telos* 25, p. 219). The injustices are "palpable" I would argue because of the contradiction between their legitimating ideologies (equality, justice, etc., which need to be reconstructed through historical readings) and their present performance.

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themselves to mystification as easily as to clarification.

The fundamental problem with *Making Sense Together* is that O'Neill has attempted to do the one thing with these insights which is utterly impossible on the basis of the arguments themselves: he has fallen into the programmatic mode, set up a rival empire of anti-method and composed an introduction to "Wild Sociology." Having demonstrated earlier the problems inherent in any attempt to map out an empire of method before confrontation with concrete problems and interests, O'Neill now treats us to a further set of reflections on how to proceed. To the extent that the argument clarifies what has gone before it, it is helpful. However, to the extent that it begins to map out general discussions of social existence, it lapses into a manifold of problems. As in Merleau-Ponty's last work, reflection on the problems inherent in God's-eye-view ontologies gives way to the no less nonsensical project of a *poetic ontology*. And this process of poeticization can be carried out only at a level of abstraction which permits concrete social tensions to enter only in the robes of poetry. The disastrous back cover blurb (the entire phenomenon of this pre-categorizing of books indicates the price which commodification extracts from even critical attempts; lacking reviews—which are always haunted by the prospect of appearing transfigured as advertisements—we find the logical conclusion: reviews written with the intention of becoming ads) promises that herein we will find "the suffering and the celebration which modern sociology ignores." And indeed, one does find "suffering" and "celebration" invoked, but on a level where the categories are more significant because of the alliteration on the "s" consonant than because of the relationship the categories might bear to the dynamic of industrial civilization. In short, it becomes hard at times to read the book as much more than an ode (or ad) for mundanity.

It is necessary to discuss the style of *Making Sense Together* not out of a desire to ridicule idiosyncracies instead of discussing arguments, but rather because the style is inseparable from problems engendered by the argument itself. At the ever-present risk of ripping hunks of language out of context, a passage taken from the outline of the tasks set for "Wild Sociology" may serve as a fairly typical example of what the reader will find present: "We make our lives from what is around us, from our family, our house, street, playmates, school, teachers, friends, books, comics, and church. But we forget this. Our projects take us away from home; they sweep everything behind us as a past we hardly remember. We move on, looking for wider perspectives, new experiences, unseen things. Our thoughts destine us for utopia and in this we are for a time heroic figures, resisting the inertia of things, giving them our own extraordinary accent. But things beckon us back—the weight of things, their touch, their smell; the time of things, their seasons; the way of things, their uses—all of these offer us a chance of salvation, a redemption rooted in things, often comically, but in an ultimate wisdom. For the truth of the life world is that the way of things is the way of ourselves with them, like the friendship of a man and his dog—a bond of faith, a mutual need, each unthinkable apart from the other, even in argument and anger" (MST, 9-10).

Nothing here explicitly contradicts the points which I take as the most significant part of O'Neill's argument: that criticism is rooted in the relevancies of the concrete historical life-world. But the style of presentation represses all of the concrete relevancies, which more often than not are driven by more concrete and painful motivations than the beckoning of things which is invoked in the middle of this passage. The aggregation of nouns in the first sentence is painfully stretched between poeticization and reification. These long lists, which occur throughout the book, tend to promote hasty readings interrupted only by the few words which can be seen as

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contradicting the oppressive forward movement of these compilations (here, the presence of "comics" can be played off against "church" and "family"). But a more careful reading should force us to realize that any recollection of the concrete attributes of the members of this group leads to a denial of the claim that in them and from them *we* make our lives. To make such a claim is a vain assertion of human power in the presence of institutions which crush as well as nurture. We must remember that the labor involved in "making a life" resembles more that of an assembly line than that of the artisan. Likewise, the notion that "things beckon us back" by their weight, touch, smell, seasons, way, or uses risks a dual mystification. First, it falls into reification in attributing the end of efforts to break out of the confines of "home" (which is never as pleasant as O'Neill would have us believe)[6] to various aspects inherent in the natural course of things. And secondly, by describing the force exerted on man by these fetishized things as a "beckoning," O'Neill has left out of the picture the violence with which the attempts at escape from the prison of home, family, job, and nation are suppressed. To begin with conceptualizations such as these is to foreclose that investigation of the processes by which things take on a fantastic power over man which has been the essence of the project of critical social theory. Finally, any analysis which attempts to condense the truth of the life-world in the metaphor of man and dog needs to be reminded that the metaphor contains dialectical twists which "a bond of faith, a mutual need" only serves to conceal: "The dog is to be esteemed and pampered in exchange for a loyalty that man cannot provide; but it is also to be whipped and beaten back to the life of a wolf from which it came... That which is domesticated...is sustained by that which is wild, that which is *made* wild. The liberation of man is the liberation of nature and man, the liberation of the dog wolf and the life fit for a dog; it is the resolution of the tamed and the tamer, the violated and the violator."[7] O'Neill's earlier fear was that he had succumbed to the ills of repressive communication in a style of writing which was too sterile and academic (SSK, xiv). But the voluptuous writing which characterizes much of *Making Sense Together* is only an abstract negation of the repression of the erotic dimensions of language in academic sociology (which after all must be seen as testifying in a one-sided truth to the repression of the erotic dimensions of language in modern *society*). The revolt against this repression turns into a poeticization of the very source of the repression. The young Lukács knew the results well: "Lyrical mood-dominated romanticising of the structures of social reality cannot, given the fact that reality at the present stage of development lacks pre-stabilised harmony, relate to the essential life of the interiority.... Reality refuses to be forced up to such a level of meaning, and...no artist's skill is great and masterly enough to bridge the abyss."[8] The jargon of *Mitsein* is no less a symptom of repressed communication than the jargon of sociology. Both fail to trace the contradictory relationships of humans and things (*one* form of which is the transformation of humans into things) by suppressing one side of the contradiction. Sociological jargon completes reification by its failure to trace the

6. The mythology associated with "home" appears to vary inversely with the individual's ability to function in the world; one of the high-water marks of praise for the glories of the hearth coming in the midst of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire in Vienna. On this point, cf. Carl Schorski, "Cultural Hot House," *New York Review of Books*, XXII:20 (December 11, 1975), p. 40.

7. Russell Jacoby, "Reversals and Lost Meanings," in Paul Breines, ed., *Critical Interruptions* (New York, 1972), pp. 66-67, 69.

8. Georg Lukács, *Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 140, 143. The case Lukács is discussing is that of Novalis.

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historical dynamic which underlies the ability to speak of human activity in thing-like terms, while the jargon of *Mitsein* conveys a blessing on reification through a transubstantiation of such "merely ontical" activities as fetching, hustling, and procuring (all of which would be more intelligible renderings of *Besorgen* than the inane "concern")[9] into the ontological category of *Sorge*.

Hence, this discussion of style reveals what I see as one of the more serious problems plaguing O'Neill's book: the inability to work within a theoretical framework which remains faithful to the contradictions of everyday, concrete social existence. The tendency towards poetic ontology hardly helps us to understand the everyday, conventional basis from which social criticism might arise. This stylistic problem also arises when O'Neill deals with other theorists' works, which he chooses as "places of embellishment" and "as holy works seeking the redemptions of correct spelling in the salvation of divine and human reading" (MST, 12-13). The most problematic case is the use of Vico (MST, 28ff.), where the stress on finding a forefather for "wild sociology" leads to a neglect of the tension in Vico's work between Baconian systematization and poetic ontology. By grasping only at the poetic ontology side, O'Neill cannot preserve the fundamental dynamic of the *New Science*: institutions become transparent and the contradictions contained in Vico's version of reason's ruse are lost. Perhaps the neglect of the systematic side of Vico's work can be justified by the decision to concentrate solely on Vico's philology (MST, 28n), but the problem recurs throughout the book in terms such as "sociological faith," "sociological prayer," etc. As with Vico's philology, "sociology" is simply seen as an abstraction from the "wild sociology" of everyday life. By not giving systematization its due, O'Neill has cut himself off from a major problem: is the "domestication" of sociology nothing more than a forgetfulness of origins which need only the remindings of "wild sociologists" to call it back home, or does the entire dynamic of formalization and abstraction arise out of a fundamental formalization and abstraction of the *historical life-world itself*. By simply denying the validity of domestic sociology (or by grounding it as a justified, though limited, abstraction, MST, 27), one is free to reassert a more fundamental level of social existence without ever confronting the truth which domestic sociology has as the alienated expression of an alienated life.[10]

The discussion of James Agee (MST, 55ff.) strikes me as being much more informed, for here O'Neill seems to have found an author whose work can be illuminated by a reading which is sympathetic to its concern for the description of the recurring events of everyday life. But even here I think it can be argued that the tendency to suppress rough edges leads to a reading which neglects contradiction in favor of poetry. O'Neill notes that Agee contrasts the metaphors of camera and cross, yet the analysis which follows focuses on the religious allusions to the exclusion of the

9. Heidegger has more trouble with the economic associations which *Besorgen* calls to mind than his translators have allowed English readers to have. Cf. his attempt to dispose of the "Vorwissenschaftlichen, ontischen Bedeutungen" which the term has in ordinary language. For a brilliant development of the economic implications of *Sorge* and *Besorgen*, cf. Karl Kosik, *Dialektik des Konkreten* (Frankfurt, 1967).

10. On this point, cf. *ibid.*, p. 89, as well as Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, *Aspects of Sociology* (Boston, 1972), pp. 117ff., esp. 122-124. "The usual objection, that empirical social research is too mechanical, too crude, and too unspiritual shifts the responsibility from that which science is investigating to science itself. The much castigated inhumanity of empirical methods is still more humane than the humanizing of the inhuman." The "existential-ontological" evasion which the authors note in German thought of the time (1956) seems to be present in ethnomethodology also.

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documentary. Or, to be more precise: documentation enters only in religious language. This is to lose one whole aspect of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*: the fact that the text arises out of a negation of a series of photographs which with hyper-realism document destitution, does not mean that the text may be separated from its original context and used as a "meditation upon the nature of wild sociology" (MST, 58). To separate Agee from Evans is to cancel the contradiction and create a much more sentimental text than in fact exists. O'Neill's discussion of an incident in the text where Agee attempts to approach a young black couple who are frightened into flight by his approach documents what is lost. O'Neill writes: "...we need to trust to the rituals of approach even where...they do not quite succeed.... Agee fails to allow for this deeper trust in the young couple, perhaps a while later, to recover themselves and decide he meant them no harm.... If Agee sins at all against the couple, it is because he does not allow for forgiveness from them. He insists upon being the greater victim of the misunderstanding, whereas the young couple, despite all the times they have been chased and beaten, might on this occasion have realized that they had been startled and that it was their fear that set the other man after them because of his own anxiety not to be thought ill of by them" (MST, 70-71). The optimism of this analysis can be sustained only by the hypostatization of a "deeper trust" which itself sustains a faith in conventional social rituals. Agee's point seems to be rooted in a more profound understanding of the historical and social contingency of all "deeper trust." O'Neill's expectation that *Mitsein* can undo the alienation between white and black in this situation amounts, once again, to a failure to recognize the power which reified conventions now have over human interaction. Conventions bear the weight of the accumulated violence which they make possible ("...despite all the times they have been chased and beaten..."), and the failure of recognition contained in the constant appeal to a deeper solidarity leads to a maintenance of the violent solidarity which conventions sustain ("...we need to trust to the rituals of approach even where...they do not quite succeed..."). As usual, optimism and a tacit sanguine acceptance of domination join hands.

And in retrospect one may even suspect that this tendency to suppress contradictions is present in the Husserl discussion of "Can Phenomenology Be Critical?" (SSK, 221). By suppressing the claims of phenomenology to be the heir of the universal science which constituted the essence of the European sciences at their birth in favor of a notion of "limited reflexivity," O'Neill (like Merleau-Ponty before him and ethnomethodology beside him) ignores the role which this telos might play as a ground for criticism. The "limited reflexivity total reflexivity" opposition is abstract, as the failure of the essay in question to ever indicate what is involved in "total reflexivity" betrays. The true opposition which Husserl places at the center of his analysis is that between the process of technification and the finite vocational tasks associated with it on the one hand and, on the other, the infinite tasks to constitute a humanity which could find more to integrate it than the assurance of ontological *Mitsein*. The incoherence of the claims of absolute archimedian groundings are hardly remedied by placing limitations on the notion of grounding. Rather, the entire realm of discourse must be transcended: methods, interests and subject matter constitute a concrete totality from which various methodological, ethical, and substantial problems can be abstracted only if the background from which they are abstracted is preserved.[11]

11. I have outlined some implications of this situation in my article on "Lukács' Theory of Proletarian *Bildung*," *Telos* 24, esp. pp. 34-35.

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The discussion which has been carried out here may seem to move on an intolerable level of abstraction, and this whole consideration of the costs involved in presuming that the original and fundamental aspect of human interaction is *Mitsein* might be safely ignored if it were not for the fact that this assumption appears to underlie the way in which O'Neill makes the move from ontology to political practice. A hint is contained in *Making Sense Together* which can be expanded upon by a few glances at a recent paper on Fanon and Freire: "It may be asked, then, whether a sociology of the commonplace can be radical. I shall answer that in the face of the bureaucratic and corporate rationality of the professional sciences nothing can be more radical than a sociology inspired by the love of human circumstance and its great conventions. Wild sociology rejects the ambition of the professional social sciences to assimilate themselves to the structure of domination that teaches the oppressed to see themselves through the eyes of their oppressors, to sift the oppressor's language for some word the people can understand, to accept as charity the return for their own gifts" (MST, 78-79). Freire's notion of criticism as a task of providing a new *naming* for the world (a project which O'Neill sees present also in the work of Franz Fanon) serves as the model for this conception of a radical mode of social theorizing. Such criticism is claimed to "serve the classical Marxist purpose of revealing the *moral structure* of the colonial world by naming its own protagonists in the light of the historical drama that will make the last first and the first last."[12] Certainly this conception is commensurate with the notions which I discussed at the start of this review and which as such indicate what I feel to be important considerations for critical thought. Yet I want to suggest that the problems of ontology which have occupied the greatest portion of this review are of importance here also, especially since O'Neill is at times given to speaking of the struggle for liberation as a struggle to realize the "ontological destiny. . . to become human beings who answer the call of the name of man in their own way and in accordance with their own capacity to name their world."[13]

As before, ontological constructs divide a historical, dialectical relationship into an ontological dualism. The historically developed tensions between past and present which served as the fulcrum of the "horizontal critique" which O'Neill's previous works had developed here give way to a much simpler distinction between "human circumstances and its great conventions" and "bureaucratic and corporate rationality." The cost of such a distinction is that it becomes impossible to trace the historical and social process by which past and present can come into contradiction with one another. In place of a historically grounded critique of ideologies, which seeks leverage against the present ideological formulations by recalling the repressed unhappy consciousness, what seems to be proposed here is a simple ontological shift, from the world of corporate rationality to the world of "ethno-rationality." While such a move might be possible in the colonial situation which serves as the concrete basis for the work of Fanon and Freire it is not clear that the model may be generalized to all cases. The organization of consumption in advanced capitalist societies could be expected to effect the "great conventions" of human life in ways which the more openly brutal reorganization of colonial societies does not. The very openness of colonial suppression gives the metaphors of Fanon and Freire a weight which might not be capable of transfer to modern industrial society. The historical situation of colonial repression gives to the repressed a forgotten language and set of social customs which may

12. "Le langage et la décolonisation: Fanon et Freire," *Sociologie et Sociétés*, VI:2, p. 54.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

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provide the necessary leverage (this does not say that the leverage provided will lead to anything more humane than a substitution of more domestic forms of suppression for colonial rule). But in modern society it is not at all clear that everyday rationality has managed to withstand the forces of mass manipulation, and the appeal to the ontological solidarity of the *Lebenswelt* as the *deus ex machina* which will rescue one-dimensional society from ideological conformity is as strained as the reliance on the ideal speech situation which O'Neill has criticized in the work of Habermas.

The assumption that in itself the conventional wisdom of the population is an adequate leverage against the force of controlled consumption, bureaucratic rationality, the culture industry, etc., goes hand in glove with the fatalistic optimism that assumes that "the great body of mankind. . . heals its own wounds in the strength of its time" (MST, 81). Criticism is historically contingent, drawing its strength from the accidents of the socialization process or the flaws in the veil of reification. It cannot claim to base itself in transcendental categories or in the type of ontological levels which O'Neill here sees as testimonials to a fundamental solidarity. It is not from the conventional wisdom of society that the dialectic proceeds, but, rather: "Once it has recognized the ruling universal order and its proportions as sick. . . then it can see as healing cells only what appears, by the standards of that order, as itself sick, eccentric, paranoia—indeed, 'mad'; and it is as true today as in the Middle Ages that only fools tell their masters the truth. The dialectician's duty is thus to help this fool's truth to attain its own reasons, without which it will certainly succumb to the abyss of the sickness implacably dictated by the healthy common sense of the rest."[14] "Wild Sociology" will avoid domestication only if it realizes that its responsibility is to lend its voice to the communication of the insights of the elements of nonconformity which still can be found working against the conventional patterns of domination and consumption which one finds poeticized in *Making Sense Together*. It will remain critical only if it trades the pronouncements of "common sense" for the dialectical meanderings of the "fool's truth."

James Schmidt

14. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (London, 1974), p. 73.

Ian Taylor, Paul Walton, Jock Young. *The New Criminology: For a Social Theory of Deviance*. Harper & Row: New York, 1973. 325 pages. $3.95.

Ian Taylor, Paul Walton, Jock Young, eds. *Critical Criminology*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, 1975. 268 pages. $15.00.

That Marxists have traditionally paid little attention to crime is not simply attributable to the fact that Marx and Engels themselves wrote scarcely anything on the topic. Rather, this neglect manifests a deeper theoretical devaluation rooted in the classical Marxian analysis of the capitalist mode of production, an analysis which has

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resulted in a frequently fetishist focus on the industrial proletariat as the tendential *collective subject*. Crime, for the most part, has been relegated to the parasitic and politically insignificant *Lumpenproletariat* and one-sidedly viewed as symptomatic of the endemic degeneracy and "demoralization" of industrial capitalism. At best, it has occasionally been treated as a form of transitional or pre-political (individual) revolt which cannot, in itself, play an historically important part in the revolutionary process and which, in any event, is ultimately destined (like law and the state) to disappear with the abolition of class society and the advent of genuinely *universal* communism.

Today, however, it is difficult for Marxists to continue to maintain their time-honored theoretical and practical complacency with respect to crime. For one thing, the sheer volume of criminal activity in Western societies—especially the United States—makes it all but impossible to ignore.[1] Moreover, the effective integration of the industrial working class, the abrupt collapse of the New Left, and the utter impotence of any kind of terrorist underground would appear, ironically, to leave crime, by default, as the most popular—if not the most viable—ongoing form of "extra-parliamentary opposition" available in the U.S. Furthermore, in the past decade, the tenability of Marxist criminal stereotypes has been drastically eroded by the exceptional, but nonetheless exemplary, thought and action of numerous "convicted felons."[2] And finally, the need for reassessment of the Marxist position on crime seems to receive at least tacit sanction from developments in *critical theory* which question labor's privileged status and alternatively suggest the potentially catalytic or revolutionary role of various segments of the population "peripheral" to or entirely excluded from the production process.[3]

In this context, it is appropriate to consider these two books by a trio of Marxist criminologists from Britain since they are unquestionably the most significant documents produced to date by the small but growing movement to fill the increasingly urgent need for a coherent radical or critical perspective on crime.[4] Briefly, in the earler work—*The New Criminology* (hereafter *N.C.*)—Taylor, Walton and Young undertook a comprehensive "immanent critique" of the entire multifarious tradition of crime and deviancy theory, beginning with classical utilitarian criminology, and including variants of biological and psychological positivism, the anomie theory of Durkheim and its subsequent modifications by Merton and others, the "Chicago School," the social reaction approach, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, Marxism, and the Dahrendorfian conflict theories of Turk and the early Quinney. In addition, the authors sought to go

1. The annual *Uniform Crime Reports* just released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that last year's 18% increase in serious crime in the United States was the largest ever recorded. According to the *Reports*, nationally there were apporximately 4821 serious crimes reported for each 100,000 population; or about one crime for every 20 persons.

2. A few contemporary prison writers whose names immediately come to mind are Claude Brown, Eldridge Cleaver, George Jackson, Sam Melville and Malcolm X. In the 1970's especially, there have been numerous instances of prisoner revolt (Attica being the prime example) which have been of a directly political nature. Cf. John Pallas and Robert Barber, "From Riot to Revolution," in Erik Olin Wright, *The Politics of Punishment* (New York, 1973). For a good account by an observer of the events at Attica see Tom Wicker, *A Time to Die* (New York, 1975).

3. There have been many such suggestions in recent years. Some of the more interesting are: Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston, 1969); Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975); Claus Offe, "Further Comments on Müller and Neusüss," *Telos* 25 (Fall 1975), pp. 99-111; and Jean Baudrillard, *The Mirror of Production* (St. Louis, 1975).

4. Outstanding essays by radical criminologists have also been collected in a volume edited by Richard Quinney, *Criminal Justice in America* (Boston, 1974). Another excellent source is the journal *Crime and Social Justice*.

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beyond critique by affirming the superiority of an ultra-eclectic (what they called "fully social") theory of deviance, and by indicating, in schematic fashion, the formal and substantive requirements of such a theory. Although the book was controversial and not completely original,[5] its encyclopedic character was enough to cause it to be generally well-received and widely regarded as radical criminology's belated manifesto. The second volume—*Critical Criminology* (hereafter *C.C.*)—is anthology consisting of some new work by Taylor, Walton and Young; a piece by another British author (Geoff Pearson); a sampling of recent but previously published contributions by several outstanding representatives of radical criminology in the U.S. (Tony Platt, Herman and Julia Schwendinger, William Chambliss and Richard Quinney); and a concluding polemical exchange between the editors and the Althusserian Paul Hirst. A number of these essays contain valuable reflections on the origin, development and current condition of radical criminology on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as projections for future growth.

Although radical criminology today is virtually without exception in claiming for itself the mantle of Marxism, its original pretensions were somewhat more modest. Of the various substantive areas of social science, criminology historically has been the one most clearly committed to the maintenance of the established order. Beginning with the work of Cesare Lombroso (circa 1876), modern positivist criminology had consistently and unabashedly advanced *pathological* conceptions of crime—cast in terms of a multitude of biological, psychological and sociological determinants—which blatantly displayed its fundamentally conservative policy-orientation toward more effective law enforcement and penological reform in the interests of deterrence, treatment and rehabilitation (i.e., "correction"). Against this background, radical criminology first emerged during the institutional upheavals of the 1960's, as one aspect of the general process of politicization that was sweeping through social philosophy and the human sciences (*C.C.* p. 1). And reflecting as it did the social movements that spawned it, the new criminology initially took the form of negation or critique.

Specifically, like the anti-psychiatry movement (e.g., Laing and Cooper), radical criminology in the beginning saw itself primarily as a *revolt against correctionalism*,[6] i.e., a revolt against that general perspective on deviance which "has to do with understanding a social phenomenon only to the point of being able to rid society of the phenomenon in question" (*N.C.* p. 232). At the outset, this anti-correctionalist spirit found embodiment in what was then—and in many respects continues to be—the most progressive liberal perspective on deviance, namely, the largely American "social reaction approach." Here was a sociological orientation which seemed to successfully circumnavigate not only the quagmire of correctionalism but the myth of value-nautrality as well. Through a sort of "Copernican Revolution" in deviance theory, social reactionism proposed to adopt the partisan standpoint of the deviant (as opposed to that of the established order), and in so doing to thematize and render problematic the heretofore taken for granted creation and enforcement of the norms (including

5. A not entirely disinterested reviewer—Austin Turk—called *The New Criminology* a "perversion" of scholarship. Others had begun to critique conventional criminology long before the work of Taylor *et. al.* appeared. One such person, upon whom the authors relied heavily, is David Matza. Cf. especially his excellent critique of the positivist tradition in *Delinquency and Drift* (New York, 1964); and his sustained polemic against correctionalism in *Becoming Deviant* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969).

6. Cf. Robert Mintz, "Interview with Ian Taylor, Paul Walton, and Jock Young," in *Issues in Criminology*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring 1974), especially pp. 33-34.

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laws) of conventional society. As one early and prominent advocate of the approach put it, "social control becomes a 'cause' rather than an effect of the magnitude and variable forms of deviation."[7]

In the 60's, the critical implications of this appraoch seemed obvious. Reassessing the radicalizing influence of what he chooses to call "misfit sociology," Pearson notes that the conception of deviance as "something arrived at and constructed in negotiations between deviants and audiences," served important *de-reifying* functions by "directing attention to the understanding of welfare practices and ideologies as a vital component of any understanding of deviance" (*C.C.* p. 149). Misfit sociology thus appealed to the libertarian New Left's "preoccupation with how men and women are oppressed by the subtle violence of everyday life" (*C.C.* p. 150). Sharing Pearson's retrospective mood, Young's essay further recalls that, in insisting that deviance be viewed as a social quality ("label") *bestowed upon* otherwise authentic human cultural *diversity*, the social reaction approach seemed to overturn the central correctionalist conception of deviance as pathological (*C.C.*p. 66). In other words, it appeared to restore to deviance the subjective meaning and authenticity which the objectivistic accounts of orthodox positivist criminology had denied. Not surprisingly, therefore, radical criminologists at first almost instinctively seized upon the "cutting edge" of social reactionism as the theoretical basis for elaboration of their critique of correctionalist (i.e., "Fabian") criminology and for their affirmation of the subversive, emancipatory potential of the "marginal" social groups which they observed to be in movement all around them at the time.

However, notwithstanding its apparently critical implications, enthusiasm for the appraoch eventually began to wane in proportion as suspicions grew that it was just another—albeit more circumspect and sophisticated—form of liberal correctionalism. In his notorious "zookeeper" polemic of 1968, Gouldner offered what was then the most forceful rendition of the incipient radical critique.[8] Essentially he argued that, despite its partisan posturing, the "underdog sociology" of Becker and his cohort was, in reality, "a sociology of and for the new welfare state." In the first place, social reactionism's purported defense of the authenticity of deviance was specious. For the underdog conception of the deviant as *victim* of mismanagement by society's caretakers "has the paradoxical consequence of inviting us to view the deviant as a passive nonentity who is responsible neither for this suffering nor for its alleviation—who is more 'sinned against than sinning.' " In other words, the pathological model had been jettisoned only to be replaced with an equally inauthentic conception of the deviant as "man-on-his-back." Secondly, Gouldner claimed that the *objective* ideological standpoint of underdog sociology was not at all that of the deviant, but rather, that of the cosmopolitan, upper-echelon, bureaucratic elite. While it offered a *limited* critique of the

7. Edwin M. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), p. 18. As it was developed, the social reaction approach suggested that society "creates" diviance in several significant ways, not ordinarily recognized or appreciated by traditional sociological explanation. First, it is obvious that, in establishing certain rules, society also establishes the very possibility of deviance. Second, for an objective act of rule-breaking to acquire full significance as deviance, it must be socially recognized; that is, it must be identified as such by some social audience. Finally, labelling a person "deviant" frequently sets in motion a process of social interaction (i.e., "transaction") with such profound consequences of the individual's conception of self that commitment to further deviation is actually enhanced.

8. Gouldner's essay, "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State," has lately been reprinted in a collection of his work entitled *For Sociology: Renewal and Critique in Sociology Today* (New York, 1973), pp. 27-68.

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"unenlightened middle-class bigotry" of middle and low level officialdom, underdog sociology also participated in a subterranean symbiotic relationship with the central welfare bureaucracy. On the one hand, high-level national bureaucrats needed information about deviants and their treatment in order to facilitate long range forecasting and prudent reform. Consequently, they were quite willing to support underdog research—even when conducted from the underdog's standpoint—"for much the same reason that colonial governments supported similar researches in anthropology." Liberal sociologists, on the other hand, could provide the necessary information—all the while assuring themselves and others of their underdog partisanship—and be comfortably funded in the bargain. Thirdly, and perhaps most noteworthy in terms of the subsequent development of radical criminology, Gouldner pointed out the latent or *inadvertent* nature of underdog sociology's ancillary function: "It must not be thought for a moment that Becker's work performs this ideological function through any *intention* to further the ambitions of the upper officialdom or by any intention to conduct his research in any narrowly conceived applied manner. It achieves its ideological consequences primarily by taking and revealing the standpoint of those for whom local caretaking officials are responsible and by 'unmasking' the ignorance of these officials." (my emphasis)

Now even if it is true, as Pearson maintains, that Gouldner's "one-sided" critique failed to make intelligible the radicalizing influence of social reactionism (*C.C.* p. 157), it nonetheless did have the initially salutary effect of indicating the unanticipated difficulty of the project of freeing criminology from the strangle-hold of correctionalism. And radical criminologists were quick to derive and assimilate the lesson: ostensible adoption and support of the standpoint of the deviant would no longer suffice. If they were to successfully overcome correctionalism, radicals somehow would have to devise more foolproof *strategies* which would ensure that they too did not end up—however inadvertently—supplying the social control apparatus with administratively useful information.

Thus, the critique of the social reaction approach marked an important turning point in the evolution of radical criminology. For one thing, developments from this point on would increasingly tend to be in the direction of a broadly conceived Marxism. But, in itself, this does not account for the peculiar configuration of radical criminology today. Even more important is the fact that the critique of social reactionism gave birth to *strategic anti-correctionalism*: Henceforth, although generally Marxist in character, developments in radical criminology would also be considerably shaped and *constrained* by an overweening concern to formulate and adhere to strategies for avoiding correctionalism. The significant impact of this latter phenomenon is clearly evidenced by the representative work of British and American radical criminologists which is brought together in these two volumes by Taylor, Walton and Young.

Strangely enough, the American break with social reactionism was abrupt and relatively clean.[9] Platt's essay provides a handy overview of the three principal directions radicals in the U.S. subsequently took in their struggles to create an altenative

9. Although there were several noteworthy attempts to breathe new critical life into the approach with massive transfusions of Dahrendorfian conflict theory, none of them ever really caught on among radicals in the States. Cf. especially Austin Turk, *Criminality and Legal Order* (Chicago, 1969), and Richard Quinney, *The Social Reality of Crime* (Boston, 1969). Turk was never accepted into the radical fold at all, and although Quinney's radical credentials were in order, his earlier work failed to have much impact. By comparison, the British break with the social reaction approach has been much more gradual.

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(anti-correctionalist) perspective in criminology. One of these chief concerns has been to deepen and intensify the critique of the ideology shared in common by all forms of correctionalist criminology: the ideology of liberalism. Platt himself offers a critical analysis of the four main components of this liberal ideology. First, according to Platt, most establishment criminologists—in assuming *a State definition of crime*—"continue to be predominantly concerned with the background, reform, and control of legally defined and prosecuted 'criminals' " (*C.C.* p. 96). The prevalent "rehabilitative ideal," in conjunction with the positivist orientation in criminology, serves to divert attention *away* from criticism of officially constituted legal agencies, *toward* a search for abnormal or pathological aspects of criminal behavior and the construction of more effective techniques of social control. Platt further suggests that a second dimension of liberalism in criminology is *reformism*, i.e., "the belief that it is possible to create a well-regulated, stable and humanitarian system of criminal justice under the present economic and political arrangements" (*C.C.*, p. 97). Conventional criminology thus aims at gradualist programs of amelioration within the framework of corporate capitalism, stressing the need for technocratic solutions and enlightened policy-making. In addition, liberal criminology tends toward *pragmatism*, i.e., "a rejection of macroscopic theory and historical analysis, in favor of an emphasis on behaviorism, pragmatism and social engineering" (*C.C.*, p. 98). Finally, liberalism displays a closely related *cynicism* and lack of passion. That is to say, it manifests a vision of "enlightened experts fighting a losing battle against an 'ignorant public' and corrupt government," and thereby "reveals an attitude of cynicism and defeatism concerning human potentiality and the possibility of far-reaching changes in society" (*C.C.*, p. 99).

Platt's essay further indicates what has been a second major motif of radical criminology in America: the creation and substitution of non-legalistic definitions of crime. From the critique of liberal correctionalist criminology, radicals have derived the following proposition: "In the past, we have been constrained by a legal definition of crime which restricts us to studying and controlling [read 'correcting'] only legally-defined 'criminals' " (*C.C.*, p. 103). In other words, radical criminologists in the United States have tended to equate the study of legally-defined criminals with correctionalism. And, conversely, under their overall strategy of avoiding correctionalism, they have tended to adopt the tactic of rejecting the legalistic definition and study of crime: "A radical criminology requires a redefinition of subject-matter, concerns and commitments" (*C.C.*, p. 103). The Schwendingers' article, "Defenders of Order or Guardians of Human Rights," is probably the best-known and most articulate expression of this second radical concern to redefine the object of inquiry. It presents an extensive review and critical analysis of the thirty-year-old dispute over the definition of crime within conventional criminology in which the discipline's legalistic resolution of the controversy is clearly tied to the growing concern with problems of social integration (i.e., order) which accompanied the rise of monopoly capitalism and the new corporate liberal state. The Schwendingers reiterate the familiar conclusion: "Guided by the metatheory of social control, many American criminologists functioned as technocratic 'consultants' who spent their lives gathering information which would be of use to the men who managed existing institutions, whether they were aware of this or not" (*C.C.*, p. 131). Having once again called attention to the danger of inadvertent correctionalism, the authors proceed to offer a tentative outline of an alternative "humanistic" solution to the problem of formulating a radical (anti-correctionalist) definition of crime; a solution which, they suggest, should be organized around the concept of

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egalitarianism and based on an historically grounded interpretation of human rights. According to the Schwendingers, such an overcoming of legally operative definitions—which have allegedly rendered the activity of the criminologist subservient to the state—would enable radicals "to ask whether there are violations of human rights which are more basic than others and to designate these rights as most relevant to the domain of criminology" (*C.C.*, p. 136). Specifically, radical criminologists would then be free to legitimately investigate as "criminal" certain "social relationships"—such as "imperialism, racism, sexism and poverty"—which "cause the systematic abrogation of basic rights" (*C.C.*, p. 137). Thus the Schwendingers suggest that the adoption of a natural law conception of crime is an effective means by which radical criminology might secure its anti-correctionalist position: "In this process of redefining crime, criminologists will redefine themselves, no longer to be the defenders of order but rather the guardians of human rights" (*C.C.*, p. 138).

Returning to the overview furnished in Platt's essay, reference is made to yet a third endeavor that has occupied the energies of radical criminologists in the States: the construction of radical theory. More precisely, Platt observes that another prime concern has lately been compensating for the "poverty of radical theory" resulting from "the repression of Marxist scholarship in universities and the liberal emphasis on pragmatism and social engineering" (*C.C.*, p. 104). But if there is anything that still survives from the erstwhile social reactionism of radical criminology in the U.S., it is the primary critical focus on the agents and agencies of social control. And in virtually every instance in which the Americans have attempted to appropriate and apply Marxist theory in criminology it has been for the limited purpose of radicalizing the analysis and critique of criminal law and the state in contemporary capitalist society. Quinney's article is no exception. It begins with the ritualistic admonition of mainstream correctionalist criminology for traditionally devoting its attention exclusively to the study of the *violator* of criminal law, with the conservative result that: "Solution of the crime problem has been in terms of changing the law-breaker rather than altering the legal system" (*C.C.*, p. 184). Against this, Quinney argues: "What is urgently needed is a critical philosophy of legal order" (*C.C.*, p. 181). By "critical philosophy" he means a philosophy that demystifies the oppressive social order. But in addition, according to Quinney, to be truly critical such a philosophy "must ultimately develop a Marxist perspective" (*C.C.*, p. 190). The central purpose of Quinney's article, therefore, is to set forth his ideas of what a critical (i.e., Marxist) philosophy of legal order might entail.[10] The only point to be made here is that Quinney exemplifies the third tendency of radical criminology in the United States: the attempt to develop a Marxist theory of law and the capitalist state. And just as in the two previous instances (i.e., the critique of liberalism and the redefinition of crime), this third concern is directly linked to the movement's

10. At the end of a confused and circumlocutory discussion, Quinney offers the following statement of conclusions which is worth quoting here at length since it unfortunately is representative of the current condition of Marxist theory among radical criminologists in America: "Thus, criminal law in the USA can be critically understood in terms of the preservation of the existing social and economic order. Criminal law is used by the State and ruling class to secure the survival of the capitalist system. And as capitalist society is further threatened by its own contradictions, criminal law is increasingly used in the attempt to maintain domestic order. The underclass, the class that must remain oppressed for the triumph of the dominant economic class, will continue to be the object of criminal alw as long as the dominant class seeks to perpetuate itself. To remove the oppression, to eliminate the need for further revolt, would necessarily mean the end of the ruling class and its capitalist economy" (p. 199).

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essential anti-correctionalist stance. As Quinney has elsewhere aphoristically stated: "A critical criminology is no longer a correctional criminology."[11]

The discussion to this point has been concerned with describing, in a general manner, what it is that radical criminology in the U.S. *does*. But it now becomes equally imperative that attention be given to what it *does not* do. In the first place, if academic repression is any measure of lack of utility, then it may be said of radical criminologists in America that they apparently do not fall victim to correctionalism, inadvertent or otherwise. That is, they seem not to provide the state apparatus of social control with information that is instrumental in "correcting" or controlling criminals. But in reading the essays by the Americans, one cannot help noticing something else as well: these radical criminologists demonstrate a conspicuous lack of theoretical and empirical concern with issues directly related to the phenomenon of crime *per se*. Stated somewhat differently, they appear to systematically *abstain* from rigorous inquiry into the concrete nature and meaning of crime in advanced capitalist society. These two non-accomplishments are, of course, considered to be mutually interdependent. As already highlighted, in the American context the critique of correctionalist criminology has turned on a particular understanding of the inextricable and insidious nexus between theorizing and gathering information about deviance on the one hand, and subservience to the established order on the other. Thus, for example, Quinney has typically urged radicals to dispense altogether with the category of deviance on the grounds that it "tends always to be formulated in a way that serves the existing oppressive order."[12] Ever since the critique of the social reaction approach, radical criminologists have been haunted by the spectre of *inadvertent correctionalism*. And this great fear—that to squarely face the question of crime would only be to provide (albeit unintentionally) administratively useful information—has finally led them to solve the problem by virtually abolishing the question of crime as such, shifting the primary focus of their efforts instead to such palliative pursuits as the critique of liberalism, the analysis of the capitalist legal order and the definition and investigation of the "human rights" crimes of the capitalist system and its ruling class. In their abiding struggle against the sworn antagonist—correctionalism—radicals in the States have embraced a determinate *strategy of avoidance,* namely, *abstentionism*. And it is this abstentionist strategy—not Marxism—that mainly accounts for the uneven contours of radical criminology in America today.

In itself, there is nothing really problematic about abstentionism. But then it is made evident by Platt and others that they are also concerned with developing a *radical practice*. Now, herein lies the great contradiction of radical criminology in the U.S. While it professes the most profound commitment to emancipatory practice, its abstentionist strategy of avoidance forecloses precisely that which it most urgently needs: *a substantive critical theory of crime* from which could be derived viable practical imperatives. Assuming that the commitment to practice takes precedence over the abstract methodological principle, why does abstentionism persist?

The entire situation is rooted in a deeper and more telling *epistemological* issue. The fundamental premise underpinning the abstentionist strategy of avoidance is that to *know* crime is necessarily to *explain* crime, and thereby to make it vulnerable to repressive interests in prediction and technical control, i.e., correctionalism. But even

11. Richard Quinney, "Feature Review Symposium" of *The New Criminology* in *The Sociological Quarterly* 14 (Autumn, 1973), p. 593.
12. *Ibid.*

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more significant, this premise is also identical to that of conventional criminology's *empirical-analytic* cognitive paradigm.[13] Ironically, radical criminology, far from having rejected the dogma of orthodoxy, continues daily to affirm (although negatively) orthodoxy's most sacred truth. Abstentionism manifests the extent to which radical criminology is not yet really free of the mainstream, is not yet really radical. For it reflects an inability to envision, let alone construct, an alternative mode of critically apprehending the phenomenon of crime. Failing this, radical (anti-correctionalist) criminology must avoid correctionalism *mechanically*, in the only way remaining open to it: abstentionism. Left to operate on the dubious assumption that "what you don't know can't hurt you," it has simply resolved not to "know" crime at all.

In a sense, then, radical criminology in America suffers from a genetic cognitive defect, one which now threatens to mutilate all further development. As long as the empirical-analytic premise remains intact, its disfiguring influence will continue to be felt—through the mediation of *methodological anti-correctionalism*—to the detriment of *both* theory and practice. The consequences are especially dire for that part of the movement which is self-consciously seeking to develop a *coherent* Marxist approach to crime; no less than the emancipatory *telos* itself is in jeopardy. For in the process of *elevating* mechanical anti-correctionalism to the regulating principle and point of honor for the entire radical criminology movement, both the movement and its anti-correctionalism actually tend to be *reduced* to a static and fetishistically conceived methodological proscription. The great danger is, therefore, that as radical criminologists in the U.S. increasingly come to adopt a Marxist point of view, a strange and pernicious dialectic will take place: For a critical Marxist theory of crime, radical criminology will be constrained to substitute the inferior (i.e., underdeveloped) fetish of *anti-correctionalist Marxism*. Compelled to comply with the formal requirements of strategic anti-correctionalism, Marxism will tend to be substantively subverted in the process. This is all the more possible in view of Marxism's notorious theoretical backwardness with respect to crime. Ultimately, nothing short of the creation of an alternative, fully critical cognitive paradigm will do to abolish the debilitating empirical-analytic premise and complete radical criminology's break with its stifling past. This is the task that now must take priority. Only this final act of intellectual patricide will clear the way for the *organic* development of a coherent emancipatory criminology in the United States.

In Britain the situation is no less disturbing, if the work of Taylor, Walton and Young is any indication. There, anti-correctionalism has been enthroned in strategic form as *anti-pathologism*, where it once again threatens to hinder the progress of radical criminology by jealously demanding that all developments pay homage to it. This avoidance strategy of anti-pathologism (along with its attendant consequences) emerges most clearly in *The New Criminology* where—as a result of their thoroughgoing "immanent critique" of conventional criminology—Taylor *et al.* reach the conclusion that "all correctionalism is irreducibly bound up with the identification of deviance with pathology" (*N.C.*, p. 281). Conversely, the authors are most intent upon arguing for a "fully social theory of deviance" which must "by its very nature, break entirely with correctionalism" (*N.C.*, p. 281). Their critique is directed mainly against determinism —be it biological, psychological or sociological—which, "in erecting a view of crime as non-purposive (or pathological) reaction to circumstance," serves to "withdraw

13. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971), especially the "Appendix," pp. 301-317.

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authenticity and rationality from the criminal act itself," and also "offers the possibility of rational planning and control" (*N.C.*, p. 35). Here there appears the syndrome of determinism, inauthenticity and irrationality which, according to Taylor *et al.*, defines the formal parameters of conventional (correctionalist) criminology's conception of deviance. And it is in terms of this syndrome that the avoidance strategy of anti-pathologism becomes intelligible. While American anti-correctionalism (abstentionism) led radicals to redefine or altogether expel the conventional category of deviance, in England the strategy has been to *invert* it: if correctionalism presupposes pathology, then anti-correctionalism must presuppose anti-pathology. Consequently, the essential features of radical criminology's alternative conception of deviance are defined *antithetically* by the inverse of each of the correctionalist terms, i.e., by free choice, authenticity and rationality.

It is worth pausing at this point to make several observations. First, radical criminology in Britain has staked its reputation on an anti-pathological conception of deviance which is entirely *deduced* from a prior commitment to anti-correctionalism and which therefore may or may not have theoretically meaningful reference in the social world. Second, this in turn bespeaks the fact that the British, like their American counterparts, have been unable to *positively transcend* the empirical-analytic cognitive paradigm of conventional criminology. Instead, they have merely sought to *elude* appropriation through a mechanical inversion of the correctionalist model of deviancy. Third, radical criminology in Britain, as a result, takes the form of *abstract negation* and in so doing remains contradictory and paradoxically dependent upon the presence of conventional (correctionalist) criminology to confirm its very existence.

The problematic consequences of mechanical anti-pathologism for radical criminological *theory* are clearly underscored as soon as Taylor *et al.* attempt to move to a Marxist "structural" analysis which would somehow establish linkages between crime and the oppressive, exploitative "material" conditions of capitalist society. For here the reified strategy of avoidance *dictates* that, if such linkages are to be made at all, they must under no circumstances violate the anti-correctionalist strictures against pathologism, i.e., they must not impart the slightest pathological connotation to criminal action. Now this poses a serious problem for Taylor, Walton and Young to the extent that Marx tended to view the criminal as "demoralized and brutalized by the day-to-day experience of employment (and unemployment) under industrial capitalism" (*N.C.*, p. 218). Thus they are critical of Marx for having held "a conception of the criminal man as pathological" (*N.C.*, p. 267). Such a conception, they continue, "understressed an alternative view of man as purposive creators of action" (*N.C.*, p. 267). Yet at the end of the book, the authors nonetheless claim to have argued for a "political economy of crime." How have they accomplished this theoretical sleight-of-hand? In particular, how have they been able to reconcile a "material" analysis of crime with the demands of the avoidance strategy of anti-pathologism?

In point of fact, they have not reconciled the two at all, but rather, have merely tried to camouflage the conflict *gramatically* by appealing to an ostensibly Marxist view of human beings *in general* as "both determined and determining" (*N.C.*, p. 213). But whereas in Marx, as Lukács has shown,[14] the *theory of reification* renders this formulation a dialectical unity of opposites, in Taylor *et al.* it remains a volatile *contradiction* which always tends to explode when brought to bear in any concrete analysis: one moment the criminal is viewed as *pure victim* (i.e., object), the next as *pure rebel* (i.e.,

14. CF. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

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subject). Thus the authors are forced to concede: "A dialectical tension is apparent between man as determining actor (exercising free will) and man as an actor whose 'will' is a product of his times" (*N.C.*, p. 215). To label a contradiction "dialectical," however, is not to resolve it. The fact remains that, despite favorable references to the work of Lukacs and others, Taylor *et al.* completely lack the necessary theoretical mediation: *a critical theory of consciousness*. And what is more, it is clear that this theoretical deficiency derives neither from Marxism, nor from ignorance, but from the British avoidance strategy of anti-pathologism which already *precludes* acceptance of such categories as second nature, false or reified consciousness, one-dimensional thought, distorted communication, etc., to the extent that they all imply something less than unqualified authenticity. Similarly, the authors reject Bonger's suggestive critique of "egoism" on the grounds that it "laid his subjects open to the correctional endeavors of a positive criminology" (*N.C.*, p. 233). In always presupposing a "degree of consciousness," the anti-pathologism of Taylor, Walton and Young thus tends to introduce contradiction where originally there is none: it imposes a selective reading of Marxism which systematically occludes the critical theory of consciousness, wherein is supplied the necessary missing link between economic conditions and crime, *between society and the individual*. And by the same token, it renders utterly inaccessible most of the work done by 20th century Western Marxists, whose *leitmotif* has been exactly the problematic nature of consciousness. And unfortunately, Taylor, Walton and Young show little indication of having made any significant progress in the direction of overcoming this problem. On the contrary, if there is a discernible tendency in the more recent work, it is in the direction of retreat into an *abstentionism* of their own: "The project then is to build a materialist criminology which flows out of a materialist analysis of law in propertied, capitalist societies" (*C.C.*, p. 55).

Another difficulty arises with respect to the question of *practice*. Here also can be clearly witnessed the contradictory and self-defeating consequences of the anti-pathologist strategy of avoidance which simply inverts the terms of correctionalist criminology. The crux of the British anti-correctionalist argument is the contention that "deviance is normal" (*N.C.*, p. 282); an assertion which ultimately derives from inversion of the correctionalist view that deviance is irrational and *ipso facto* abnormal or pathological: "For us, in one sense at least, deviants are always rational creatures; like any other persons, they engage in choice and evaluation" (*N.C.*, p. 156). Rationality is "defined operationally" in terms of "optimum balance," i.e., reason obtains only at the level of an optimal *relationship* between means and ends, or between an immediate end and all other ends, purposes and values of the actor. Taylor *et al.* present a *subjective* conception of reason which does, in fact, serve its intended short-term, anti-correctionalist end by allowing the authors to defuse deviance as a salubrious expression of normal "human diversity." Indeed, they have elsewhere taken the argument one step further: "Traditional criminology... has always been concerned to correct human diversity... We would want to argue that human diversity is something to be glorified in many ways... In a sense, therefore, we would reverse the equation of pathology with diversity, and erect an equation between diversity and honor..."[15] However, while such a view may succeed in obliterating the distinction between conformity and deviance—thereby rescuing the latter, *theoretically*, at least, from the jaws of correctionalism—its effect is also to expunge all disparity from *within* deviance. In short, the result is *relativism*. Like another trio (were they anti-

15. Mintz, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

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correctionalists, too?) from antiquity, whose names have long been forgotten, Taylor *et al.* can see, hear, and speak no evil of deviance, as long as it meets the criterion of rationality (i.e., optimality), defined according to the *actor's* standpoint. Now this is a very strange position for radical criminologists to hold.

Claims to the contrary notwithstanding, it seems that in their headlong flight from correctionalism, Taylor and company have plunged blindly past the warning signs—so clearly posted by critical theory nearly three decades ago[16]—directly into the dreadful swamp of *subjectivism* where, for the "direct action revolutionary" (*N.C.*, p. 280), manifold contradictions redound upon one another. Consider, for example, the following statement: "However distasteful we find the ends of particular deviants. . . it is still the case that their actions are based on the same process of achieving an 'optimum balance' as anyone else's" (*N.C.*, p. 156). As pointed out earlier, such a formulation may, in principle, deny legitimacy to correctionalism. But it also exacts an exhorbitant toll for the service by flattening out deviance and precluding the radical criminologist from taking the requisite first step toward practical political relevance: the penetration of the mystifying immediacy of formal rationality, to assess the *substantive* rationality of deviant *ends* themselves. It is precisely this formalized conception of reason that has led another reviewer, Elliot Currie, to observe that Taylor, Walton and Young "cannot adequately distinguish the destructive or demoralizing aspects of some kinds of deviance from the potentially liberating ones."[17] Indeed, they have deprived themselves of any substantial theoretical basis for even recognizing that such a distinction exists. Taylor *et al.* are reduced to crime efficiency experts who, at best, "may be able to show that his [the deviant's] causal assessment of the problem and the means of solving it are both palpably false" (*N.C.*, p. 174). But, however "social" their radical deviancy theory may be, for all practical *political* purposes it is inert. In itself, it leaves the radical criminologist no critical ground on which to stand. Thereby separated from and opposed to the criminal domain, the radical criminologist—*as a human being*—can glorify or deplore crime (e.g., rape), but can never intervene *qua* radical criminologist. Correctionalism, of course, has no such practical problem; its conception of reason is implicitly *objective* and substantive. This is just what gives it the "right" to identify "irrationality" and "correct" it in the first place. Its standard of rationality is the substantive one of the established order and "social defense." The anti-correctionalist inversion, however, yields only subjective reason, theoretical confusion and, ultimately, practical paralysis for the radical criminologist.

Anti-correctionalism in Britain, then, has taken a strategic form somewhat different from that of the Americans: Through inversion of the pathological conception of deviance, it has attempted to confound correctionalism. Yet, the effect has been to confound the theory and practice of radical criminology as well. Certainly Marx had something like this in mind when he cautioned that the point is not to re-interpret the world but to change it. A coherent critical perspective on crime must be grounded in the bedrock of *emancipatory teleology*, not the sand of strategic anti-correctionalism. This would not mean that anti-correctionalism would be abolished from radical criminology, but only that it would be demoted from its present, all-powerful and destructive status as an *a priori* and mechanical point of departure. Alternatively, a *substantive radical anti-correctionalism* would be but one organically emergent

16. Cf. in particular Max Horkheimer, *The Eclipse of Reason* (New York, 1974).
17. Elliott Currie, "Beyond Criminology," (a review of *The New Criminology*) in *Issues in Criminology*, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

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outcome of a genuinely critical Marxist criminology.

It is necessary, therefore, to temper enthusiasm for these two books—and for radical criminology in general—with the realization that, in both the U.S. and Great Britain, there yet remain rather sizeable obstacles to be hurdled before the difficult task of creating a really critical approach to crime can even begin. There are no shortcuts around these obstacles. But recognition is, as always, the first step. And through the use of the *second order construct*—"strategy of avoidance"—the attempt has been made to draw attention to the first obstacle that needs to be confronted: the pre-historical artifact of mechanical anti-correctionalism. This is an artifact that has outlived its critical function for radical criminology and now effectively impedes all progress. It is important to take notice of the dialectic of success and failure that is at work here. In the beginning (i.e., after the break with social reactionism), and in lieu of any coherent affirmative theory of its own, critical anti-correctionalism served the *progressive* ends of helping to free radical criminology and facilitate its self-clarification. Later, anti-correctionalism helped fight a *defensive* holding action against inadvertency, but became ossified in strategic form (i.e., abstentionism and anti-pathologism) and transmogrified in the process. And finally, in the present period, when it is exigent that radical criminology move decisively forward on both the theoretical and practical fronts, strategic anti-correctionalism assumes a purely *retrograde* function, impeding coherency by demanding ritualistic compliance with its precepts. Specifically, instead of the radical anti-correctionalism of Marxism, we are currently forced to settle for the Marxism of radical anti-correctionalism.

What is most urgently needed is a substantive critical theory that would squarely face the fundamental questions as to the meaning and significance of crime in the contemporary historical context of advanced monopoly capitalism. Questions like: To what extent is crime best understood as a form of individual, self-preservative *adaptation* to the oppressive and exploitative conditions of capitalism? And when does it mainly *express* or *reflect* these conditions? To what extent and in what instances does crime represent a *revolt* against these conditions, or some form of *opposition* to established authority? And similarly, when does increasing crime manifest or augment an intensification of the *crisis* of legitimacy? Finally, when—if ever—might crime somehow *pre-figure* a revolutionary transformation of society? These are just a few of the questions that a critical theory of crime would seek to address. Yet, they are precisely the ones that radical criminology, as it is presently constituted, is either incapable of answering (the U.S.), or has answered only dogmatically (Britain). In addressing these questions, radicals could not guarantee that their insights would not be appropriated in the interest of repressive social control. But then no such similar concern ever dissuaded Marx from attempting to theoretically apprehend the proletariat. To sum up: What Taylor, Walton and Young have said of David Matza in particular, may be said as well today of radical criminology in general: "the brilliant critique of correctional criminology reduces into a criminology that itself requires correction" (*N. C.*, p. 192). In this sense, the most pressing item on the agenda of radical criminology now is not anti-correctionalism, but correctionalism.

John Ainlay

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Otto Ulč. *Politics in Czechoslovakia*. Foreword by Jan F. Triska. W.H. Freeman & Company: San Francisco, 1974. 181 pages.

Because of its somewhat unusual shape, this well-written, solidly documented and amply illustrated work appears at first glance shorter than it is. As indicated by both the author and writer of the preface, although this study takes into account all of Czechoslovakia's politics from the country's liberation in 1945 to the present (1972), its primary interest is in the socioeconomic and political developments responsible for the brief efflorescence of the Prague Spring of 1968 and the well-known Soviet invasion for which it served as a pretext in the autumn of the same year.

The author's approach is functional, so that certain themes and topics are discussed in more than one context, though always from a different perspective and without needless repetition. As an example, Ulč mentions the question of a Stalinist subculture which is "dealt with in two separate places, as in the Party College. As befits the nature of the ruling party, it is bound to permeate the entire analysis."

The relative wealth of information (unavailable in other one-party systems) on which this inquiry is based, resulted from the temporary lifting of censorship and abolition of the whole image of a "closed society" by Dubček and his associates. After twenty years of Stalinist rigidity and conformity, Czechoslovakia began to move "from totalitarian dictatorship to an open society." In the words of the Czech philosopher Miroslav Jodl, what the leaders of the Prague Spring wanted was "socialism for the people, not people for socialism." They sought "the liquidation of the monopoly of power; effective control of the power elite by a free press as well as by public opinion...[to be accomplished] with the workers' movement, without its apparatchiks; with the middle classes, without groups of willing collaborators; and with the intelligentsia leading the way."

Hardly any aspect of the traditional Marxist ideology remained unchallenged. Even such delicate taboos as "the doctrine of the global struggle between the socialist and capitalist camps" was reexamined and found wanting. Instead of the class struggle, it was "the conflict between humanizing and dehumanizing forces" that was seen as "more relevant to the contemporary age." Indeed, so far, there has not been socialism of this kind either in Czechoslovakia or the world, "but," according to Jodl, "this is the socialism we want," and he adds quite confidently: "I have not the slightest doubt that in those countries from which obviously biased critical voices have come, the people also desire it. Nor do I have any doubt that those who have become accustomed to privilege and power do not want this type of socialism."

One of the most striking and effective features of the author's Preface is the selection of its *motto*, written by Josef Skvorecky in Prague's *Literarny Listy* (*Literary Journal*) of April 18, 1968: "Hemingway said, 'Revolution is a wonderful thing—for a time!' This is not a naive statement certainly not a reactionary one. It means, to put it differently, that a prolonged dictatorship of the proletariat degenerates into a dictatorship over the proletariat; that socialism can be accomplished *de jure* by governmental decree, but *de facto* only through democracy; that socialism without democracy is not possible. Well, pardon me: in a certain form it is possible. It was once with us in the world. It was called, of course, Nazism."

When someone familiar with the Soviet system reads these daring statements of the most recent Czechoslovak "heresy" from the perspective of the past seven years, he cannot be overly surprised that the echo came from "the tanks of August." For, as

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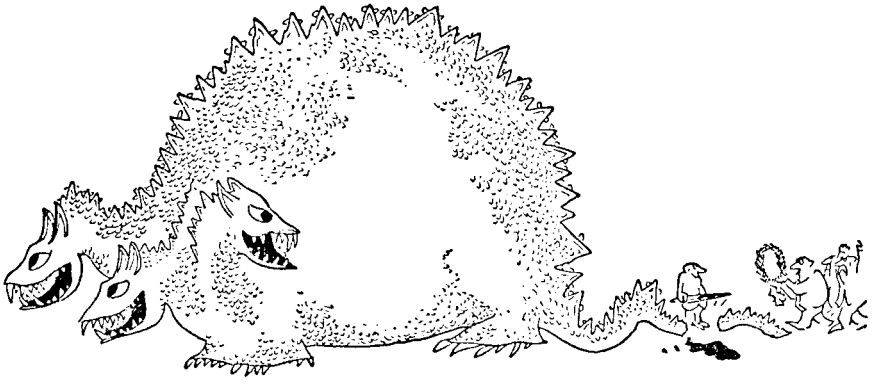
Professor Ulč himself points out, "Russia, largely sequestered from the great past movements—the Reformation, Renaissance and Humanism—was thus challenged by a society with a pre-World War II tradition of pluralistic democracy and a postwar record of compliance with the Soviet model." The undisguised ambition of the Czechoslovak reformers was "to combine socialism with democracy and economic security with civil liberties." They wanted to "eliminate Leninism as an allegedly crippling distortion of Marxism."

No wonder the Soviets would not allow them to "bring Marx back to Europe" and test his socialist theories in the more appropriate setting of a highly industrialized and civilized western society. Alas, the whole tragedy becomes even more understandable when one recalls Lenin's own realization that his homeland would probably lose some of its political and ideological priority and prestige were Marx's ideas ever to triumph in a more advanced country. It is hardly necessary to stress that such a prospect would not be especially appealing to the leaders of a power as colossal as Russia. Nor is the tragedy diminished by the undeniable fact that Czechoslovakia is, without a doubt, the most advanced and sophisticated Slavic country whose people, before the invasion, cultivated a great reservoir of good will and brotherly feeling toward the people of Russia.



De-Stalinization.
(*Literarni noviny*, August 20, 1966)

Ulč rightly reminds us that "Czechoslovakia is the only state created by the Versailles treaty whose democratic form of government was not destroyed from within. While the East European proletariat lived in semifeudal conditions, with their leaders in jail, underground or in exile, the interwar Czechoslovak socialist movement was strong and the Communist Party (Comunisticka Strana Ceskoslovenska—KSC) was a legitimate political participant." The author also emphasizes that "Socialism—though not Stalinism, to be sure—was the choice of the majority, not an import imposed by foreign military force." Yet, the Czechoslovak experiment with socialism failed rather abysmally because "the imposition of the Soviet system on the advanced, differentiated and secularized Czechoslovak system indeed resulted in a transformation, but as far as 'development' is concerned this was development in reverse." Speaking of "strains of irrationality, waste, and overextension," the writer indicates that "devices of mutual

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control" resulted "in deadlocks, overlapping, and absence of identifiable responsibility." The Party Secretariat, viewing the political system as all-embracing, was "not inhibited from pondering about the political significance of sauerkraut or encroaching upon the management prerogative of the State Retail Sauerkraut Organization." Describing the growth of Czechoslovak Stalinism under Presidents Gottwald, Zapotocky and Novotny, Professor Ulč warns, in all fairness, that "present evidence is inconclusive about whether political development in Czechoslovakia after 1948 was determined more by Soviet insistence on following its model or by the willingness, even eagerness, of local elites not to deviate from the tested example."

The author refers to the arguments according to which "all political systems based on Marxism-Leninism led at one time or another to lawlessness, liquidation of opponents (real or imaginary), and their subsequent rehabilitation" and concludes that "the faults recurrent in all the countries where the Soviet mode of government was applied could not therefore be explained by reference merely to the 'shortcomings' of local leaders—the fault must be with the system." According to the philosopher Robert Kalivoda, this system has "entirely lost its potential of becoming a realistic alternative to the modern bourgeois democracy of the European type." One can only hope that these sober remarks, born of bitter experience and serious reflection, will not fall on deaf ears!

The Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960 officially defines the Communist Party as the "state party" and Marxism-Leninism as the "state ideology." Alas, as Ulč notes, "making the state absolute also leads to its degradation, inasmuch as it is then manipulated by forces not legally or politically accountable." As a result, "in Czechoslovakia concentration of political power in a singel ruling party excluded some four fifths of the population from political participation." One of the author's most incisive insights recognizes the concept of the Party's leading role as the root of the crisis: "Political roles substitute for economic, administrative and cultural roles; before acting, governmental bodies request approval from the Party. This transfer of decision making eventually exempts administrators from responsibility; and the Party, because it is infallible, remains immune from the consequences of its own blunders. The Kafkaesque circle of *obezlichka* (dodging responsibility) is closed. The usurpation of decision making in economic affairs by the Party bureaucracy, though perhaps justifiable in conditions of economic underdevelopment, is counterproductive in a modern industrial society."

Under such conditions, "any reform of substance would have precipitated the self-destruction of the system itself, the liberation from what Kosik called 'that peculiar conglomerate of bureaucratism and Byzantinism, that monstrous symbiosis of the state and the pagan church, of hypocrisy and fanaticism, ideology and faith, the bureaucratic facelessness and mass hysteria . . .' " To make matters worse, the rulers of Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1969 represented a "conspiracy of the below average," with Novotny and his colleagues making important political decisions "during card games and occasional fist fights at their prisoner-built retreats near the Orlik castle." Of the country's three proletarian presidents, Gottwald "acquiesced in judicial murders" (nevertheless, one of Prague's biggest and most widely advertised museums is The Museum of Clement Gottwald!) Zapotocky "did not rehabilitate the innocent victims" and Novotny "could not change the inherited system because he could not change himself."

Ulč gives an excellent account of the Party's closed-mindedness and doctrinaire diletantism in mismanaging and ruining the country's economy and causing rampant

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demoralization and cynicism: "Honest work became synonymous with stupidity. This endemic deterioration was exemplified by two sayings: 'Take it easy' and 'He who does not steal from the state, steals from his own family.' In this case, from a Marxist viewpoint, the economic realm (material base) did indeed determine political culture (superstructure) in this society." In spite of this, however, Vladimir Kadlec, Minister of Education in 1968, insisted in 1969 that "an ethical crisis was the basis of the economic crisis!"

The explusion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948 triggered off a series of sinister witch hunts throughout the Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, in the early 1950s, there were 422 jails and concentration camps "serving" a population of some 13 million. "A new generation of political prisoners had been born (estimated at well over 100,000), as well as a first generation of indigenous torturers and murderers. Stalinism often meant protection of the guilty and punishment of the innocent." The perverse show trials of that period, which led to the judicial murder of the Party Secretary Rudolf Slansky and Foreign Minister Vladimir Clementis, also led to the execution (by hanging) of a prominent non-Communist woman, "former member of Parliament Milada Horakova, for a (nonexistent) political offense." Ulč's masterful discussion of "class-oriented adjudication" and of its biased practice in Czechoslovakia is one of the most successful and most disturbing chapters of this penetrating and conscientious work. I only regret that, for some reason, the author did not choose to draw upon *Sentenced and Tried*, a study of the Stalinist purges in Czechoslovakia by Eugene Loebl (Elek Books, London, 1969).

At one point, the author sums up the overall situation in Czechoslovakia, prior to the short-lived Prague "heresy," in terms of "endemic apathy, stagnant economy, low-quality products" and "miserable services." Unfortunately, this depressing description fits the country even more today, seven years after its "salvation" by foreign military intervention and occupation. The above characterization corresponds very closely to this reviewer's personal impressions gathered during a visit to Czechoslovakia in August, 1975. I wholly agree with the author's statement that "tha average citizen eats plentifully but not well. Seventy-seven percent of the population suffer from deficiencies in protein, no doubt as a result of high prices for animal products." Besides, "the Soviet invasion added to the nation's hangovers." According to the newspaper *Svobodne Slovo* (*Free Word*) of December 7, 1968, "as of late, there has been a distressing increase in alcohol consumption. This trend is in part ascribed to the political situation we got into recently." But growing intoxication, as an escape from a drab and joyless reality, is not the most conspicuous thing on the streets and squares of contemporary Prague. That beautiful medieval city is literally disfigured by ubiquitous political slogans and propaganda posters, hanging from ancient buildings and public monuments and proclaiming Czechoslovakia's "undying devotion" and "eternal commitment" to the "great and brotherly" Soviet Union and "boundless gratitude to the Red Army, our liberator."

My visit coincided with the widespread observance of the thirtieth anniversary of "Czechoslovakia's liberation by the Red Army." Not a word was uttered about the historic fact that western parts of the country, including the city of Pilsen, were liberated by the American Army. My visit also coincided with a new wave of repression against leading Marxist intellectuals, and I had to limit my contacts to occasional confidential chats with cab-drivers, salespersons, museum guides and waiters (some of whom are former university professors). I left Czechoslovakia convinced that its people

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are very, very unhappy, painfully frustrated and profoundly hurt and humiliated. On more than one occasion, the only answer to my question about what they were doing, in view of their present predicament, was: "Schweikujeme!" ("We are schweiking"). As Ulč very usefully explains, "Schweikism—the cult of Jaroslav Hašek's literary hero, Good Soldier Schweik, symbolizing the pretense of stupidity as the safest way of political survival—reached refined heights among Czechs."

In the hope that the valiant and proud country of Hus and Dubček will soon find its way back to freedom, I recomment this study to everyone concerned with Eastern Europe in general and Czechoslovakia in particular, to all serious students of Marxism, and all those who are interested in the relationship between ideals and reality, political theory and its practical application.

G.V. Tomashevich

Luce Irigaray. *Speculum de l'autre femme.* Les Editions de Minuit: Paris, 1974. 467 pages.

Freud has been repeatedly attacked by feminists and by members of the psychoanalytic profession for having stamped psychoanalysis with a masculine bias. The "return to Freud" inaugurated by Jacques Lacan has sought to restore to psychoanalysis central Freudian concepts which the history of psychoanalysis, influenced by the ideological affinities of the institutions in which it is practiced, had eroded and even obliterated. This "return to Freud" has yielded a "new" Freud, who differs importantly from the Freud of the American ego psychologists so frequently denounced by Lacan, and who, from the point of view of women and feminists, presents somewhat different problems. Juliet Mitchell, in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, has used this "new" Freud to argue that feminists' attacks on Freud have been misguided, that Freud's texts describe a situation common to all (patriarchal) culture without valorizing it, and that Freud—unlike Reich, Laing and others who have revised him—is not caught up in ideology, but is a scientist who stands above it and describes its workings. It is in this larger context, Mitchell argeues, that the "apparently" sexist bias of Freud's work should be considered.[1]

Luce Irigaray's *Speculum de l'Autre Femme* participates in its own way in the "return to Freud." The first half is devoted to a close reading of Freud's essay "On Feminine Sexuality" and an interpretation of that essay in the context of the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis apart from which, as Mitchell rightly argues, Freud's views on women's sexuality can only be partially understood. But Irigaray's work reveals that the "new" Freud raises as many, if different questions concerning women and the unconscious as did the "vulgarized" Freud who has been heretofore, according to Mitchell, the target of feminist attacks.

Irigaray begins by following Freud's description of the development of the little girl from infancy to the threshold of puberty. Though Freud "admitted" that the subject of feminine sexuality was still very "obscure," he nonetheless was willing to make an important set of statements on the subject, and it is the internal consistency of these statements which Irigaray starts by questioning. To begin with, the little girl *becomes* a woman, whereas the little boy *is* already a little man. The boy "progresses" from a

1. For further criticism and discussion of *Psychoanalysis and Feminism,* see the reviews of Elizabeth Long in *Telos* 20 (Summer 1974) and Mark Poster in *Telos* 21 (Fall 1974).

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pre-Oedipal situation in which his principal object is his mother, to a post-Oedipal situation in which his principal object is still his mother, though his relationship to her has been modified by the superego instituted in the passing of the Oedipal conflict. The little girl, however, undergoes a more radical change in her object relation in order to become a "normal woman," for while her first object is her mother, as a result of her own passage through the Oedipal complex, her object choice shifts to a man—her father.

It was because of this shift in the object choice of the little girl that Freud regarded the pre-Oedipal phase more important in understanding femininity than masculinity. And yet, Freud regarded the desire of one woman for another as a reaction-formation despite what he saw as the little girl's primary attachment to her mother. How so? Irigaray maintains that this contradiction can be explained only by the fact that for Freud the little girl as such simply does not exist—in the pre-Oedipal phase which provides the key to the subsequent development of the girl, she is, in effect, a *little boy* (p. 25). Freud himself is quite explicit on this point. The little girl's desire for her mother, which Freud can only interpret as a desire to "penetrate" the mother, and her masturbation of her clitoris, her "equivalent of the penis," are cited as proof of what he calls the primary virility of the little girl.

Freud's stance cannot be maintained, however, without certain inconsistencies and without the censorship of materials contradicting certain of his claims about the little girl. In the light of the resistance met by Freud himself when he affirmed the sexual nature of infantile curiosity, and in the light of psychoanalytic studies existing in his own day which affirmed that the little girl's curiosity extended to her vagina, his contention that the little girl is ignorant of the existence of her vagina seems strikingly arbitrary. Irigaray herself neglects this argument, choosing to criticize Freud on his own terms. Thus she shows how Freud must systematically censor interpretations of the little girl's behavior which might lead him to the question of the feminine *per se*. Just as the little girl can have no knowledge of her "own" sexuality, so she can have no knowledge of her mother's sexuality. Her (virile) relationship to her mother must be a relationship to an active, phallic mother. When the little girl represents her relationship to her mother in playing with dolls, Freud comes to the surprising conclusion that these attempts to "identify" with her mother are a sign of her virility. Playing with dolls becomes a feminine activity in Freud's sense only when the doll comes to represent a child which she wishes to have with the father, that is, as Irigary shows, only after her play has taken on the sense which the Oedipal complex will give it (pp. 93-94).

Even if one accepts Freud's contentions on the primary virility of the little girl, questions remain. In the pre-Oedipal phase, Freud notes that the little girl's aggressive impluses are neither less intense nor less numerous than the little boy's. Femininity can exist only when these active drives "disappear." Here, once again, Freud's inconsistency on the issue of feminine sexuality supplies Irigaray with the material for her criticism: for "while the 'feminine constitution' is frequently invoked to explain the destiny of her drives, one finds no justification of the fact that the little girl possesses, *naturally*, certain drives at the pregenital stages and that she no longer has them, *naturally*," once the genital stage has been reached (p. 113). For Freud, femininity is constituted by disdain for all that the little girl supposedly prized in her pre-genital, virile state—her mother and her "equivalent" of the penis, the clitoris, which Freud, curiously enough, characterizes as "diminished" in the later stages of the girl's development

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Mitchell cites Freud's belief in bisexuality as part of her defense of Freud, and by and large, even those feminists most critical of Freud have viewed Freud's theory of bisexuality as a positive step in liberating women from the tyranny of sexual stereotypes. But Irigaray reveals that Freud's theory of the bisexuality of women is in fact founded in his conviction that there is only one (masculine) libido, which is weaker or stronger in women, depending on whether they are more feminine, or more virile (as, for Freud, was the case with his women colleagues): "A bisexuality which, when analyzed, consists in a 'primary virility' on the one hand, and the 'attainment of femininity' through the acceptance of the 'fact of castration' on the other" (p. 138).

The "bisexuality" that Freud attributes to women and which coincides with the pre-genital and genital phases represents in fact two forms of the same pahllic sexuality—its presence and its absence. Irigaray underlines the importance of the Freudian *scene* in which the little boy is determined as the presence of sexuality, the little girl as the absence. The entire scene lasts the length of the glance ("*regard*") in which the little boy discovers that the little girl lacks the penis he prizes in himself. The brevity of the scene is, Irigaray argues, a deceptive measure of its importance, for not only does it fix the destiny of the boy and the girl, it establishes vision and the visible—the representable—as the ultimate measures of sexuality.

Thus Freud theorizes that the little girl will "see" herself with the same eyes with which the little boy sees her—that she, like the little boy, will have no knowledge of her "invisible" sex. Indeed, a reading of Freud's analysis of the Oedipus myth confirms Irigaray's contention that there is more at work in the little boy's "discovery" than an impartial faculty of vision, for it is Freud himself who points out the equivalence of auto-castration and of Oedipus' blinding of himself as punishment for having "known" the sex of his mother. Irigaray's point, then, is that the perceiving, knowing subject who dominates the field of vision is the subject who possesses the Phallus. With the passing of the Oedipal complex, the little boy ceases to view his possession of a penis as simply natural, and instead reinvests the narcissistic drives formerly invested in it in the ideal father—the Law—which, by preventing him from committing the prohibited incest, protects him from the "fate" which has "befallen" the little girl. But the phallic values which, in Freud's account, are instituted as a result of the Oedipal complex, itself triggered by this scene, are in fact implicit in the scene from the beginning—in the impartiality which Freud tacitly ascribes to vision.

It is not the penis *per se* that is valorized by Freud, but rather the Law which inherits the libido invested in the penis by prohibiting the act for which, it is unconsciously feared, the punishment is castration. This Law provides the basis of the son's identification with the Father and coincides with the son's integration into human culture, with his "mastery" of language, with his entry into what Lacan calls the Symbolic. The penis attains value only as it is represented and transcended, within the Symbolic order, by the Phallus. But the woman is no less devalorized within this Symbolic order than she was within the "real" order (which Lacan calls the Imaginary) described by "vulgar" Freudianism. Though Irigaray makes little explicit reference to Lacan,[2] clearly for her psychoanalysis cannot be absolved of its masculine bias by

2. Despite the marginal nature of her references to Lacan, clearly the analyst who has proclaimed a "return to Freud" is constantly implicated in Irigaray's critique. Even more than Freud, Lacan has expounded his interpretation of psychoanalysis within a philosophical framework, insisting on the link between key Freudian concepts—the Phallus, transference, denial, etc.—and their determination by the Truth. Responding to Lacan's assertions, Jacques Derrida

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citing, as Mitchell does, the transcendental or symbolic nature of the Phallus.

As irigaray points out, Freud's claim that penis envy determines the development of the little girl means that, for him, "no attempt will be made by the little girl—nor by the mother? nor by the woman?—to symbolize this 'nothing' to see" which is her sexual "identity" (p. 56). Thus, while a representation of her sex is indispensable if she, like the little boy, is to transcend the Imaginary (which, for Lacan, is always constituted by ideology) and to gain entry into the Symbolic order, the Law of the Father, which regulates the Symbolic order, prohibits the woman's representation of her sex by declaring her to be castrated, just as it prohibits any relationship to her mother not mediated by the Phallus. On this point, ideology and the Symbolic Law coincide.

Perhaps the greatest strength in Irigaray's analysis lies not in the specific points she makes against Freud, telling as they are, but in her ability to include in her ciritque the general philosophical framework which Freud shares with many humanist thinkers often regarded by feminists, if not as allies in their attacks on Freud, then at least as neutral parties. Irigaray maintains that one cannot escape from the impasse which the Law of the Father implies for women simply by invoking a "woman's identity" and by demanding in its name the rights and privileges accorded heretofore only to the Father's favored sons. For identity is founded on the subject's ability to represent himself to himself—on the very Law of the Father which prohibits such a representation to women. "All theories of the 'subject' will always already have been appropriated by the 'masculine' " (p. 165). Irigaray views the struggle for equality based on the recognition of her equal "humanity" as a predictable and necessary stage in the women's movement but one which underestimates the radical nature of woman's exclusion from bourgeois society and from the western metaphysical tradition whose humanism serves as the ideological foundation of that society.[3]

Irigaray pays tribute to Freud's role in undermining that tradition: through his demonstration of the impact of "unconscious" mechanisms on the "conscious" subject and of the degree to which the *present*—in which the subject *is*—is, not given, but always constructed after the fact (*nachträglich*). But she insists that Freud himself never "pays tribute" to the role of the "woman," whose only function is to assure the perpetuation of the Phallus as the measure of both sexuality and subjectivity. For it is the woman's exclusion from sexuality, her "envy," which forms the "outside" of a sexual realm, which permits that realm to be constituted as a homogeneous object and that object to be *represented* in a scientific discourse.

True to the tradition to which it belongs, the Freudian text exhibits a *desire* to posit

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has argued that the psychoanalytic experience analyzed by Lacan is in no way simply a given one, but that it is mediated by rules and assumptions which preclude any relationship of difference irreducible to sameness or any "symptom" which cannot be interpreted within an opposition truth error, lucidity madness. The psychoanalyst need claim no special privilege, that privilege is implicit in the psychoanalytic "experience" which makes the analyst the arbiter of the opposition lucidity madness and hence, in a sense, the creator of the illness which he then sets about curing. Irigaray's critique of Freud and of the philosophical tradition to which he belongs has much in common with Derrida's critique of psychoanalysis and philosophy.

3. Irigaray's reference to Karen Horney and other feminist psychoanalysts is fleeting, but she seems to feel that their argument (that women are equally capable of embodying phallic values since those values are culturally and not biologically defined) did not strike at the masculine basis of psychoanalysis on a fundamental level—the level of the Phallus itself and of the privileged subject who for Freud is essentially masculine and only accidentally feminine. Unlike Mitchell, however, Irigaray finds that Freud's response to the feminists indicates his own misunderstanding of the importance of the problem. For a discussion of Karen Horney's revision of Freud, see Elizabeth Long's review of *Psychoanalysis and Feminism, op.cit.*

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the subject as one, as identical to itself, and in her chapters on Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and her long concluding essay on Plato, Irigaray traces that *desire* back to the Greek origin which has been traditionally privileged by western philosophy. According to Irigaray, it is in the name of this desire that philosophy always has recourse to a mirror-representation of the subject, and philosophical Truth has depended on the purity, the neutrality, and the passivity of that mirror. Irigaray characterizes the philosophical tradition she analyzes as *speculative*, for it attempts to capitalize the interests of a philosophical subject that "naively" interprets the woman as a subject "like himself" or as simply indifferent—a mirror, mother, earth, or Nature whose "neutrality" and "passivity" entitle him to exploit her/it for his own ends. Irigaray's strategy is to undercut the absolute nature of the speculative subject by situating *his* desire. This general strategy takes varied forms depending on the philosopher she is analyzing.

In the case of Descartes, she argues that the subject's ability to seize itself as a thinking subject and, hence, as the source of all certainty, is based on a *representation* of the self to the self. The objectivity of this representation is never questioned, and yet, for Irigaray, it constitutes an *illusion* more fundamental than any which some Evil Genius might offer to the *cogito*. In the case of Kant, she points to the partiality with which he treats the problem of sensation when he maintains, paradoxically, that imagination is the most subtle sense faculty, but that it acts in the service of the rational. Kant's argument here reflects what Irigaray interprets as a desire to break with the empirical matrix[4] which would radically qualify any transcendental intuition. In her analysis of Hegel, Irigaray focuses on the "Antigone stage" of the *Phenomenology* and interprets it as symptomatic of a Hegelian "dream"—to establish a fictive symmetry between the masculine and feminine which would incorporate the potentially dissident women into the *Geistesgeschichte* while at the same time leaving the *telos* of that history, the Absolute, knowing Subject, intact. Finally, Irigaray turns to Plato, specifically to the myth of the cave—the place of error from which the Platonic subject must "free" himself in order to attain knowledge of the "eidos:" "It is with the myth of the cavern as it is an example of as it is examplary, that one can begin anew. To be read, this time, as the metaphor—strictly speaking, an impossible metaphor, as we shall see from the text—of the den, or matrix—what the Greeks called earth. An attempt at metaphorization, a process of diverting, which prescribes, surreptitiously, occidental metaphysics...but also, more explicitly...its ends and its interpretation" (p. 301).

Irigaray's general strategy of situating the desire of the philosophical subject parallels Marxism's analysis of those institutions which capitalism claims are universal—the family, private property, etc.—in the light of their historical and empirical context. Irigaray herself underscores the parallel by her lengthy quotations from Marx and Engels,[5] inserted without any direct comment in her critique of Freud (pp. 147-154). At the same time, Irigaray's general approach to the problem of feminine sexuality—through a close reading of major philosophical texts—seems to indicate her opposition to at least a certain Marxist tradition. Her approach seems to

4. Irigaray plays constantly on two senses of this word: on the sense, archaic in English, of uterus (with its etymological resonance: mother) and on the more general sense of a context, a surrounding or pervasive element within which something takes form.

5. The works cited are: *Capital, Communist Manifesto, 1844 Manuscripts, Origin of the Family.*

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reflect the notion that the conflict between theory and practice is not simply one between abstract philosophical expressions of ideology and a concrete historical-economic situation, but is a conflict central to "theory" itself, and to the the most apparently "abstract" philosophical and theoretical texts.

Irigaray's detailed analyses of Freud and Plato and her essays on Kant, Hegel, Descartes and others indicate that the problem of feminine sexuality has more far-reaching implications for more fields of study than the establishment of women's studies annexes to the main body of university curricula would indicate. Irigaray herself demonstrates the kind of repercussions this type of analysis could have for philosophy. More generally, her critique of the aspects of psychoanalysis used by Freud to support his claims concerning the scientificity of psychoanalysis—notably the homogeneity of the object of psychoanalytic inquiry, Sexuality, and the impartiality of the analyst in defining the limits of his discipline—is clearly applicable to other "sciences" whose claim to view "society" or "nature" objectively has never been subjected to the doubt which greeted psychoanalysis from its earliest beginnings.

Speculum de l'Autre Femme is an important book, not only as an exposition of the problem of feminine sexuality, but as a forceful demonstration that Freud's views on feminine sexuality as well as those of the western metaphysical tradition are symptomatic of a crisis that is synonymous with the history of that tradition—the speculative foundation of the subject through the repression of *his* other.

Suzanne Gearhart

M. Hollis, E.J. Nell. *Rational Economic Man.* Cambridge University Press: New York and London, 1975. 279 pages.

This book, which is the result of a successful collaboration between a philosopher and an economist, is subtitled: *A Philosophical Critique of Neo-Classical Economics.* To this reviewer, who is an economist, the book contains much more philosophy than economics, although a philosopher might take the opposite view. In any event, the authors devote considerable attention to some fundamental epistemological issues in their attack on Logical Positivism, which they argue is as unsound as the neo-classical economics which relies on it for a defense.

Hollis and Nell summarize their philosophical target in ten tenets: (i) claims to knowledge of the world can be justified only by experience; (ii) whatever is known by experience could have been otherwise; (iii) all cognitively meaningful statements are either analytic or synthetic but not both; (iv) synthetic statements, being refutable, cannot be known true *a priori*; (v) analytic statements have no factual content; (vi) analytic truths are true by convention; (vii) a known causal law is a well enough confirmed empirical hypothesis; (viii) the test of a theory is the success of its predictions; (ix) judgments of value have no place in science; (x) sciences are distinguished by their subject-matter and not by their methodology.

Tenets (i) and (ii) are fundamental to any empiricist theory of knowledge. Tenets (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi) define Logical Positivism as a particular empiricist theory of knowledge which underlies the philosophy of science defined by tenets (vii), (viii), (ix), and (x).

In the space of 200 pages of well written prose, each of these tenets is called into

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question on grounds which must be familiar to most philosophers. The discussion revolves around the problems of induction and deduction, which the authors refer to as two key epistemological problems which face all theories of knowledge. The problem of induction concerns the justification for projecting generalizations into the future based on past experience, and also the choice of which generalizations merit projection. The authors argue that there is no solution to this problem within Logical Positivism since facts are held to be independent of theory. Even as *a priori* knowledge, theory cannot lay claim to knowledge of the world since, in Positivist philosophy, it is only facts which are known by experience. In Logical Positivism, therefore, theories cannot support generalizations about the future and the problem of induction is insoluble.

The situation is aggravated even more, according to Hollis and Nell, because, in the absence of a well-founded theory, generalizations in the form of hypotheses cannot be tested. Two reasons for this are that theory is required to adjust the observed values of variables to their 'true' values, and conclusions which rest on an assumption of other things being equal require an independent test of that assumption or a theoretical indication of the consequences of other things not being equal. Only the latter option can avoid an infinite regress and yet it is not a course which is open to Positivists.

The problem of deduction arises in the search for a solution to the problem of induction. Deduction from a theory to a statement about the world can only have epistemological status in Logical Positivism if theory is regarded as a set of related hypotheses, and not merely as *a priori* truth. But to regard theory as this, precludes it from playing any role in solving the problem of induction since a solution to this problem must be logically prior to the selection of hypotheses to be related to form a theory.

The solution to these problems proposed by Hollis and Nell lies well within the Rationalist tradition. They argue for the existence of necessary truths which are *a priori* truths stating necessary relations which must hold in the world. This provides an epistemological basis for theory; one that is unacceptable to Logical Positivists, and allows it to guide the inductive process as well as to permit deductive statements about the world.

Whether or not this Rationalist solution to the inductive and deductive problems creates more problems than it solves, and whether it is just plain wrong (if things can be plain wrong in philosophy), are questions which require a response from philosophers. All this reviewer can do is to report a nagging doubt that, contrary to the case of the elephant which no one could define but all could recognize, necessary truths may be easy to define, but how is one to be recognized and how can disputes over what is necessarily true be resolved?

Having attacked neo-classical economics on its philosophical flank, Hollis and Nell turn to a frontal attack, the extent of which is impressive and persuasive. They are particularly critical of five simplifying assumptions which they claim are precisely the opposite of what is the case and which eliminate from consideration some of the basic sources of economic power. These assumptions are: (i) the complex institutional forms of modern capitalism are reduced to firms and households. (Hollis and Nell could have added that if the state is considered at all it is solely in its role of public money raiser and spender and its behavior is assumed to be determined outside the economic system); (ii) information about the market and technology is perfect; (iii) maximization of utility and profit (which is based on utility) is the single motivating force of economic behavior; (iv) production is highly flexible, that is, machines and workers

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may be combined in infinite combinations to produce identical commodities and that these combinations are readily substitutable for each other; (v) events happen at a logical instant rather than through historical time.

This last assumption is perhaps the least significant for neo-classical economics and with the development of dynamic theory, in which time is a variable, it is being relaxed with increasing frequency. The other assumptions certainly are objectionable and as Hollis and Nell point out, they can lead to contradictions. For example, if the acquisition of information is costly then no utility maximizer with limited funds would or could ever obtain perfect knowledge.

Although these assumptions are frequently made by neo-classical economists, it is questionable whether they are essential to a definition of neo-classical economics. Far more significant, in this sense, than these assumptions are the two essential theses of neo-classicism which are identified by Hollis and Nell. These theses are: (i) that all market payments are exchanges in the same sense; (ii) that all market costs are paid for productive work in the same sense.

These theses, which deny the classical (i.e., pre-1870) distinction between productive and unproductive labor, certainly do set neo-classical economics apart from the classical Marxian economics favored by Hollis and Nell. In this latter school, the essential focus of economic inquiry is on the surplus produced by an economy in excess of what is required for the reproduction of the agents in the economy. Important questions about the surplus are, who produces it, how big is it, by what process and to whom it is distributed. In this context market exchange is seen merely as the distributive mechanism for the surplus and not its source, and the operation of the market cannot be understood independently of the economic power which its operations reflect.

As Hollis and Nell recognize, there can be no independent test of these competing schools of economic thought, not least of all because the two theses of neo-classical economics themselves are not testable. What they do claim, however, is that neo-classical models are 'inapplicable' since the assumptions on which the models are based are false and cannot serve to define the conditions of applicability of the models. This role of assumptions is a rationalist one and it would not be accepted by Logical Positivists, who regard prediction as the sole criterion for testing hypotheses. This brings the economic debate back to philosophy, and economists must look to philosophers for further provocation and guidance in this difficult area.

Having summarized some of the main issues in the book, though there are many more which merit attention, one question remains to be asked. What difference can this book make to economics or economists? Hollis and Nell recognize that economists are unlikely, as a result of this book, to abandon neo-classical economics and to adopt the classical Marxian framework which they recommend. Rather, the authors would be content if, as they put it, they are successful in starting a fight. To one who is sympathetic to the Hollis and Nell cause, this event seems unlikely, though there is a chance that their book will ignite the smoldering discontent of radical and near-radical economists. But even if this should happen, one cannot be too optimistic about the outcome unless one believes that neo-classical economists will foresake their economic theories because of what is fundamentally a philosophical debate.

In the past 100 years there have been two periods during which the theoretical framework of economics has been changed significantly. These were the 'marginal revolution' of the 1870s and 1880s and the 'Keynesian revolution' of the 1930s and 1940s. The reasons for these 'revolutions' are not altogether clear, though they have

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been cited, unconvincingly, as examples of the Kuhnian theory of paradigmatic shifts. In the case of the marginal revolution, marginalism did have its precedents in, for example, Ricardo's theory of land rent. However, to view the active economic process as a conflagration of marginal changes and responses was a marked departure from the Classical tradition, not least because of the decline in significance given to the productive base of the economy and the greater emphasis given to demand based on the etheral notion of utility. Reasons for this 'revolution' cannot be found in terms of inconsistencies between empirical results and accepted theories since the age of empirical economics had not yet dawned. Theoretical elegance certainly played a role and gave marginalism an undoubted advantage in terms of appeal, over its Classical and Marxian competitors. More important than this, however, is the historical context of the adoption of marginalism. In contrast to continental Europe, where revolutionary politics and ideas were more popular and where Marxism found at least a tepid reception, the last quarter of the 19th century saw a Great Britain and a United States in which capitalism had taken firm root and received wide acceptance even by labor. This presented fertile ground for an economic perspective which directed attention away from distribution among the classes, in particular, and away from considerations of non-marginal issues in general.

One of these non-marginal issues concerned the level of economic activity as distinct from the behavior and interaction of individual markets. This did not become an issue for the majority of economists until the inter-war period which saw a large and enduring gap between the productive capacity of capitalist economies and the actual performance of those economies. It may be argued, however, that this alone was insufficient for the general acceptance of Keynesian ideas with its implications for substantial state intervention in the economy. Some consideration must be given to the *fact* of intervention made necessary by two world wars and the precedent this created for continuing the large scale intervention into peacetime. Again the historical circumstances made economics and economists ripe for a change.

Recent events in the world economy have once more raised questions about the current state of economics, which in business, universities, and civil service, is firmly dominated by the neo-classical school. Since the end of the 1960s, there has been a renewed interest in the Classical-Marxian tradition and *Rational Economic Man* represents one part of this movement. Even *Business Week* saw fit to publish an article on what Marxist economists were saying about the world recession. But this resurgence may well fade with the resumption of world economic growth only to come again some time hence when the world economy encounters further difficulties. If the Marxists, or for that matter some environmentalists, are right in predicting the eventual collapse of the system after a succession of fluctuations of increasing severity, then a return to the classical Marxian tradition may become a reality. What good that will be then is another question. However, in the meantime, Hollis and Nell have performed a great service to critics of neo-classical economics by providing a sound philosophical critique. And it is just possible that the end of neo-classicism may anticipate the end of capitalism and make that event a little easier to tolerate.

Peter A. Victor

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SHORT JOURNAL REVIEWS:*

ARENA, No. 39 (1975)

Box 36, P.O. Greensborough, Victoria 3088, Australia. A$6 for 4 issues. Special issue on the role of political economy within a reconstituted Marxism. LAURIE RIVERS, JIM HYDE, *"The Dominance of Finance Capital."* The reaction of capitalists to possible government encroachment on the preserves of capital accumulation represents a resurgence of Australian finance capital against the domination of overseas monopoly capital, and against the industrial and new capitalists spawned by the post-1930s boom. BRUCE McFARLANE, *"Radical Ricardians: Background to Debate."* A poorly organized outline of some recent debates between orthodox economics, the radical Ricardians and orthodox Marxists. PETER GROENEWEGEN, *"Accumulation and Tax Policy."* MELANIE BERESFORD, *"The Technocratic Labor Thesis: A Critique."* Technocratic labor has served to install the requisite elements of planning of state intervention and rationalization into Australian capitalism. Berseford simplistically assumes the "inevitable" stalling of this process, and thus anticipates rising class struggle. RALPH MILIBAND, *"Marxist Theory and the Modern State."* Three areas of recent controversy are examined: the debate over the state's relative autonomy; Poulantzas' assertion that Miliband's approach remains stranded in a pluralist problematic is eliminated; and the relation between the state and civil society (Gramsci). Miliband points to the inadequacies of current Marxist understandings of the Soviet state. TED WHEELWRIGHT, *"The Loans Affair."* Discussion of the Australian political crisis.

CRITIQUE, No. 5 (Summer 1975)

31 Cleveden Road, Glasgow, Scotland. M. COX, *"The Politics of the Dissenting Intellectual."* A discussion of Soviet intellectual dissent. The author indicates that the intelligentsia is a separate strata of Soviet society which cannot be satisfied by the ruling elites. They have a social-democratic vision which is oppositional only within a context where de-Stalinization is limited. B. GOREV, *"Russian Literature and the Jews."* Originally published in 1917 in Petrograd as a pamphlet, Gorev tries to place anti-semitism within a historical context, and shows further that the degree, type, and amount of anti-semitism varied throughout the 19th century. A useful introduction to the study of the image of the Jews in classical Russian literature. A. LEVIN, *"B. Gorev and his 'Russian Literature and the Jews'."* Postscript which points out limits to Gorev's work and the history of Gorev up to his disappearance in Russia during the 1930s. A. BUICK, *"The Myth of the Transitional Society."* A response to an earlier article by Mandel, this is a good attack on the notion of a transitional society as nonexistent in Marx and, at any rate, an obsolete 19th century concept. C. CARTWRIGHT, *"Hungary—The Myth of the Reforms."* Describes the lack of the promised reforms and the miserable everyday life for the vast majority in socialist Hungary. S. IGNIATOVIC, *"Culture and Revolution."* A Serbian poet discusses the degeneration of cultural life in Yugoslavia. He locates the problem in the stagnant social order and suggests that within this context culture must again become subversive and negative. S. IGNIATOVIC, *"The Final Word at the Trial (Not Allowed)."* The author was imprisoned for his presentation of the above article at a conference on "Culture and Revolution." His trial lasted one day, and he was refused the right to speak in his own defense. H.H. TICKTIN, *"The Current Crisis and the Decline of a Superpower."* This article discusses the wheat deals as an indication of the poverty of Soviet agriculture. "As long as an elite rules the USSR a genuinely collective agriculture is ruled out... The present collectives amounted to little more than a method of extracting the maximum surplus product for the towns." Goes on to indicate how the USSR is becoming increasingly dependent on the U.S.

CULTURAL STUDIES, Nos. 7 & 8 (Summer 1975)

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, P.O. Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT. $5.00 for this issue. Special issue devoted to the analysis of post-war youth subcultures in England. The articles represent the culmination of over three years collective work at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. This group and its journal, with its collective organization and its critical and political focus on group and class culture and leisure, is a unique and significant project. Unlike many of the American New Left, who abandoned the critical analysis of culture in favor of the labor metaphysic, this group has maintained a continuing interest in the importance of culture, leisure, racial and sexual issues. The intellectual impetus for this issue comes from a grounding and critique of transactional deviance theory (e.g., Becker's *Outsiders*)

*This journal review section has been prepared by the Toronto *Telos* Group, 240 Vanier College, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Downsview, Ont. M3J 1P3, Canada. Owing to a two-month Canadian postal workers' strike, this section is shorter than usual.

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out of which the group attempts to formulate a structural and historical analysis of youth subcultures and their relationship to working class culture and the formation of hegemony and resistance: i.e., the group attempts to ground transactional relations on a micro level within broad historical trends and class and power relationships. While the study of culture and leisure is as significant, if not more so, than the analysis of labor and political parties, the English have a tendency to reduce everything to traditional Marxian concepts of class and power with a little hegemony thrown in to sophisticate the analysis. Thus, while many of the articles in this collection break new ground as cultural analysis, they uncritically incorporate this analysis within many traditional conceptions of the working class and power in capitalist society. Twenty articles are included in this issue which deal with the development of theoretical perspectives on subcultures, specific ethnographic studies (all English), and the methodology of ethnographic research. J. CLARKE, S. HALL, T. JEFFERSON, B. ROBERTS, *"Subcultures, Culture and Class: A Theoretical Overview."* CCCS MUGGING GROUP, *"Some Notes on the Relationship between the Societal Control Culture and the News Media."* T. JEFFERSON, *"Cultural Responses of the Teds."* D. HEBDIGE, *"The Meaning of Mod."* J. CLARKE, *"The Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community."* P. CORRIGAN, *"Doing Nothing."* P.E. WILLIS, *"The Cultural Meaning of Drug Use."* G. PEARSON, J. TWOHIG, *"Ethnography through the Looking-Glass: The Case of Howard Becker."* C. WEBSTER, *"Communes: A Thematic Typology."* D. HEBDIGE, *"Reggae, Rastas and Rudies."* R. POWELL, *"Unemployment, the Context of Street Boy Culture."* I. CHAMBERS, *"A Strategy for Living: Black Music and White Subcultures."* C. CRITCHER, *"Structures, Cultures and Biographies."* J. CLARKE, *"Style."* G. MURDOCK, R. McCRON, *"Consciousness of Class and Consciousness of Generation."* A. McROBBIE, J. GARBER, *"Girls and Subscultures: An Exploration."* R. POWELL, J. CLARKE, *"A Note on Marginality."* P. CORRIGAN, S. FRITH, *"The Politics of Youth Culture."* B. ROBERTS, *"Naturalistic Research into Subcultures and Deviance."* S. BUTTERS, *"The Logic of Enquiry of Participant Observation: A Critical Review."* Plus thirteen pages of references.

HECATE, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July, 1975)

G.P.O. Box 99, St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia 4067. A$4 a year (é issues). *"Editorial."* Divisions within the women's movement are its strength, a part of the renaissance of feminism. The Editors stress the importance of self-conscious reflection on the history, theory and practice of feminism as part of the ongoing process of the development of political practice. RAYMOND EVANS, *" 'Soiled Doves': Prostitution and Society in Colonial Queensland."* The state regulation of prostitution in this instance served to guarantee a supply of non-Caucasian prostitutes for white men in the cities and for "colored" men in labor camps. This is viewed as a way of disciplining white women to whom prostitution appeared as a better alternative to the low pay and hard work of domestic servitude. MARGARET POWER, *"The Making of a Woman's Occupation."* The sexual division of labor is due to social and economic factors rather than biological characteristics. Thus, Power encourages women to enter 'male' occupations, and is optimistic about the potential benefits to the economy that would accrue when people are employed for their talents rather than their sex. It is distressing to find such a productivist viewpoint—which welcomes the breakdown of the sexual division of labor for its economic benefits to capitalism rather than from the viewpoint of the liberation of women—included in a feminist journal. NANCY PECK, *"Getting Off on Rape."* All men are potential rapists and all women are potential victims: the author argues that this is the logical outcome of sex-role socialization and that rape research must stress this point in order to change attitudes and sex roles. LINDA GORDON, *"Race Suicide and the Feminist Response."* Falling birth rates in the early 20th century in the U.S. gave rise to hysterical fears on the part of the white male power structure of "race suicide" and to ideological polemics (exhorting women to produce more children) that concealed a broader attack on women aimed at keeping them in their proper sphere. Gordon examines feminist responses to this attack. ROSALIND INNES, *"On Ideology."* An incoherent defense of Freud, Althusser and Juliet Mitchell against attack from feminists who fail to understand that a science of psychoanalysis is necessary for understanding and eventually overthrowing women's oppression. This defense is continued, though more successfully, by MERLE THORNTON, in her review of Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism.* Thornton makes the point that whatever Mitchell contributes to an understanding of Freud, she still fails to demonstrate precisely how this understanding is relevant to the struggle for women's liberation. Also included: poetry, fiction, and Sylvia Plath bibliography.

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INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter 1976)

Sociology Dept., University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. $4 per year low income, $8 per year otherwise. ALAN NASSER, *"The Twilight of Capitalism: Contours of the Emerging Epoch."* Through analysis of the contemporary crisis of global monopoly capitalism, the author attempts to project the shape of the emerging epoch. In particular, he argues that the present crisis is marked by a unique constellation of tendencies related to the endemic erosion of profit. To alleviate this "profit squeeze," the world bourgeoisie—mediated by the liberal State—must launch increasingly frequent and massive assaults upon the living standards of the working class. As a result, we are entering a period of transition out of which will emerge either revolutionary socialism or permanently enforced Austerity Capitalism. For the left, the immediate future holds the possibility of new strategic opportunities. To the extent that massive intervention reveals the class character of the State, it will be possible to wage the struggle at a more directly political level. AL SZYMANSKI, *"The Socialization of Women's Oppression: A Marxist Theory of the Changing Position of Women in Advanced Capitalist Society."* While arguing that capitalism is the cause of women's oppression, Szymanski departs from traditional Marxist accounts by attempting to show that there is a radical change now occurring in the locus and nature of this oppression. Specifically, the socialization and increased productivity of housework means that the material base of women's oppression is rapidly being transferred from the family to wage labor: "Women are rapidly becoming proletarianized." STEPHEN JOHNSON, *"How the West Was Won: Last Shootout for the Yankee-Cowboy Theory."* After a thorough review of all 34 pages of the literature pertaining to Carl Oglesby's Yankee-Cowboy theory of the divided ruling elite, Johnson conducts a Domhoffian crucial "test" of the thesis by examining the makeup and control of a sample of major U.S. defense contractors. On the basis of data concerning ownership, director interlocks, elite club memberships, campaign contributions, etc., the author concludes that the Yankee-Cowboy theory is not valid, and that it mistakes a ruling class crisis for a ruling class split. J.D. HOUSE, *"A Note on Positivism."* The author criticizes mainstream sociology for being "bad science." Whereas natural scientists have realized and circumvented the limitations of the positivist program, social scientists (particularly sociologists) "have attempted to develop a positivist sociology and, in so doing, have lost sight of society." But critical sociology, says House, correctly rejects positivism—implicitly adopting a "realist" model instead—and thus "moves toward a better philosophy of social science."

KURSBUCH, No. 39 (April, 1975)

Issue Theme: The Countryside

Kursbuch-Rotbuch Verlag, 1 Berlin 30, Potsdamer Strasse 98, West Germany. 8 DM per issue. ERNST BLOCH, *"Gespräch über Ungleichzeitigkeit."* Discussion of the concept of uneven development which sets the stage for the subsequent articles which take up various aspects of provincial life in West Germany and the political issues it poses. PETER O. CHOTJEWITZ, *"Neuland—Leben in der Provinz."* A participant observer account of the nature of community life in an agricultural village. BURKHARD DRIEST, *"Hablstark in Peine."* Some memories of a rural childhood. NILS THOMAS LINQUIST, *"Der Nachbar und das Allgemeine."* A sharp contrast is drawn between the easy, open friendships among the left in urban areas and life in a small town where there is only a superficial openness. *"Lehrlinge in der Provinz."* Excerpts from tapes in which 3 apprentices (from the countryside, a small town, and a large city) describe their experience. The situation outside large cities appears more difficult because of the lack of alternatives. D. BELLMANN, W. HEIN, W. TRAPP, G. ZANG, *" 'Provinz' als politisches Problem."* Regional inequality is posed as both a theoretical and a practical problem for the left; this constitutes the unifying theoretical framework of the entire issue. WALTER MOSSMANN, *"Die Bevölkerung ist hellwach!"* A case study of a rural protest movement based around concrete ecological issues. The dominance of urban intellectuals in the left is criticized and the very notion of *Provinz* rejected as part of a patronizing attitude. MICHAEL BUCKMILLER, JOSEF FENZL, *"Ein Gespräch von Spontaneität und Organisation in der Provinz am Beispiel Wasserburg."* More interviews.

LEVIATHAN, No. 2 (1975)

Claus Koch, D 1000 Berlin 12, Mommsenstrasse 66, West Germany. RUDOLF HICKEL, GUENTER SCHMIES, *"Orientierung ohne Perspektive."* This is a commentary on the second draft of the Social Democratic Party's political-economic platform, concerned with, e.g., the role of the state, the market and its control, economic growth and reform. These guidelines demonstrate the extent to which the party has retreated from the reform policies of the early 1970s. The

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party tends to economize its reform policies, to reduce public participation, and to intensify its public relations so as to gain legitimacy. WOLF-DIETER NARR, *"Warum sich eigentlich mit der SPD beschäftigen?"* The SPD platform only serves as bourgeois decorum, and is not even directed at particular voting groups. This deception aims at pacifying both the party's left-wing and the *Jusos*. STANLEY DIAMOND, *"Anthropologie am Scheideweg."* This is a translation of "Anthropology in Question," in D. Hymes, ed., *Reinventing Anthropology*. WOLFGANG MUELLER, *"Anmerkungen zu Stanley Diamond."* Diamond's article remains on an "anti-imperialist" level typical of left-wing intellectuals in the U.S. during the 1960s and early 1970s. His concept of alienation is unsuited to grasp the capital-labor antagonism which is both the real source and basis of the objectifications described so comprehensively in his essay. The missing link—both in an historical and structural sense—is analyzed by Marx: exchange relations are to be understood as the surface phenomena of developed industrial capitalism. FRIEDRICH GERSTENBERGER, *"Produktion und Qualifikation."* Within the debate on the political economy of education, it is generally assumed that technical change requires a more highly qualified labor force. But the need for cost-reduction which presupposes the guarantee against "disturbances and interruptions" means that it is necessary to make the productive process as independent as possible from human capacities. This can be achieved by using machines instead of direct human labor power, and by splitting up and standardizing those human functions which remain indispensable. Here Gerstenberger reiterates the old argument about increasing organic composition of capital, and maintains that a general rise in the level of qualification can hardly be expected. Events since the 1950s bear his argument out: there are even tendencies to de-qualification. ANDRE GUNDER FRANK, *"Weltkrise, Klassenkampf und 1984."* This article was published in *Socialist Revolution* 25 and is summarized in the previous issue of *Telos* on p. 263. DIETER SENGHAAS, *"Friedrich List und die neue internationale ökonomische Ordnung."* This is a contribution to the ongoing debate on a New International Economic Order, questioning some of the most stubbornly held premises of conventional international trade theory. Senghaas shows that List's theory of productive forces and his various ideas on the development of coherent social and economic formations are important for theories of autocentric development as they are presently conceived in contradistinction to the prevailing theories of "development" within periphery capitalism.

MONTHLY REVIEW, Vol. 27, No. 4 (September, 1975)

62 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011. $9 per year. PAUL M. SWEEZY, *"Class Struggles in Portugal—Part I."* Sweezy is concerned whether the present Portuguese situation is a revolutionary process. He analyzes political power and the character of class struggle, finding between April, 1974 and summer 1975, promising activity of the Armed Forces Movement, military support of popular organizations, and involvement in developments toward political consciousness, that suggests radicalization toward revolutionary, proletarian politics. This phenomenon substantiates the hope that the Portuguese armed forces are not a reactionary element in a revolutionary situation. *"The MFA as a National Liberation Movement: A Document of the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal."* AN OBSERVER, *"The Crisis in India."* HARRY MAGDOFF, *"Madame Gandhi: Rhetoric and Repression."*

MONTHLY REVIEW, Vol. 27, No. 5 (October, 1975)

PAUL M. SWEEZY, *"Class Struggles in Portugal—Part 2."* An examination of Portugal's political parties which shows the CP to be particularly vulnerable: its politics have been bureaucratic and denunciatory. The council movement initiated by ultra-left parties and strongly encouraged by the MFA contains the most revolutionary potential. Sweezy sketches a dilemma in which either a transition to socialism must be begun by eliminating the present Portuguese economy, or the economic sway is turned around, prompting favorable capitalist investments. Both are gloomy prospects suggesting a coming confrontation between left and right in an unstable society. JOHN EHRENREICH, *"The Dictatorship of the Proletariat in China."* DAVID A. GOLD, CLARENCE Y.H. LO, and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, *"Recent Developments in Marxist Theories of the Capitalist State. Part 1."* An outline of the inadequacies of the traditional approaches in Marxist formulations of a theory of the state; the instrumentalist, the structuralist, the Hegelian-Marxist. Instrumentalist writers, dealing with social causes in group terms by focusing on the relations between the state and a ruling class, are aligned here with the pluralists.

MONTHLY REVIEW, Vol. 27, No. 6 (November, 1975)

JACOB MORRIS, *"The Wierd World of International Money."* ANTONY WARD, *"European*

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Capitalism's Reserve Army." PAUL M. SWEEZY, *"The Road to Socialism: Chile."* Refinement of issues between Sweezy and Julio Faundez on questions assessing left power, strength, and potential in a particular situation ending in its defeat. DAVID A. GOLD, CLARENCE Y.H. LO, and ERIK OLIN WRIGHT, *"Recent Developments in Marxist Theories of the Capitalist State. Part 2."* There are developments toward dissolving the rigidity of sub-superstructural theories of the advanced capitalist state; Offe focuses on institutional mechanisms of crisis management as the best method of determining a *capitalist state* as a state concerned with capital accumulation; O'Connor's theory embraces the monopolistic, the competitive, and the state sectors of the American economy as a theory of contradictory process; Wolfe combines structuralism and Hegelian-Marxism (!) into a value theory framework which views the state as a product of both capitalist interests and class struggle. Some clear, sensible propositions toward a *general* theory of a qualitatively changing capitalist state are made.

MONTHLY REVIEW, Vol. 27, No. 7 (December, 1975)

"Savings, Consumption, and Investment—An Interview with Paul M. Sweezy" deals with current world economic problems. JOHN SAUL, *"Free Mozambique."* An account of the coming to power of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) as a revolutionary event, and of the first weeks of independence for Mozambique. A sketch of the past work and vital potential of the *grupos dynamizadores* in political education and self-government and an indication of the rebuilding which lies ahead. ANTONY WARD, *"European Migratory Labor: A Myth of Development."* ANDREW L. MARCH, *"China: Image and Reality."* News of progress and promise in the People's Republic of China.

NEUES FORUM, No. 255 (March, 1975)

Museumstrasse 5, A 1070 Vienna, Austria. DM 7. ILSE M. ASCHNER, *"Wie drück' Ich mich?: Anleitung für Wehrdienstverweigerer."* The new Austrian law which encourages non-military options for fulfilling the 8-month service required of young men is viewed as part of a policy of professionalizing the military and coping with unemployment, but nevertheless as a progressive step. ARNOLD KUENZLI, *"Wider die rote Bourgeoisie: In Vertidigung der Gruppe Praxis."* A defense and account of the fate of the *Praxis* group, several of whose members have been associated with the *Neues Forum*. DOBRICA COSIC, *"Gefährlicher Sozialismus: Aus einem Vortrag."* Excerpts from a speech. *"Herauf aus der Untenlage!"* A series of personal accounts, documents, and reports on the state of women in Austria, Germany, Italy and Portugal. ERNEST MANDEL, *"Inflation und Klassenkampf."* A defense of indexing as a "progressive" strategy in wage conflicts. TERENCE McCARTHY, *"Dem Kapital geht die Luft aus: Der Staat muss den ganzen Laden übernehmen."* Analysis of the phenomenon—more striking in the U.S. than in Europe—of the state as the "fire-fighter" of capitalism. HEIDI PATAKI, *"Die Kamera in der Klinik: Psychiatrische Lehrfilme im österreichischen Filmmuseum."* A review of different therapy strategies based on their instructional films.

NEUES FORUM, No. 256 (April, 1975)

MICHAEL SIEGERT, *"Endlösung der Slowenenfrage: Forumkommentar."* Commentary on the Slav problem in Austria. JOSEF DVORAK, *"Scharfe und arme Hunde: Schleiferprozess in Krems an der Donau, 10-14 März 1975."* MICHAEL KERBLERZ, *"Wo war der Zucker? Die Brutalität der Monopole."* An account of the European sugar shortage. HEIDI PATAKI, *"Schönes sehen, Wohlklang hören. Marginalien zu einem regierungsoffiziellen Kulturbericht."* Critique of a recent government-sponsored research project on culture in Austria. FRIEDRICH GEYRHOFER, *"Die scheigende Minderheit: Juso-Kongress in Wiesbaden, 28. Februar-2 März 1975."* A report on the congress of the Young Socialist wing of the SPD which attempts to explain the criticism of the youth group. RICHARD BUENEMANN, *"Freiheit ist Zwang: Interview über die Berufsverbote in der BRD."* Interview with an SPD official (since expelled) critical of recent legislation banning political undesirables from public jobs. Also documents and reports on the application of this easily abused law which threatens a whole generation with exclusion from a career in the cultural sphere on the basis of ill-defined political associations. That such legislation was initiated by the social-democrats reveals the depth of the crisis of German social-democracy. ALEXANDER LANGER, *"Was tun gegen einen Putsch? Portugal und Italien im Frühjahr 1975."* ENZO SANTARELLI, *"Wird Italien faschistisch? Ein Interview."* BRIGITTE HEINRICH, *"Gefängnistagebuch."* Prison diary of a young economist charged with terrorism on the basis of dubious testimony. Selections from Angela Davis' recent book recounting her experience in prison. HEINZ SOBOTA, *"Unterm Joch: Arbeit im Gefängnis."* Personal account of Austrian prison work.

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NEW GERMAN CRITIQUE, No. 6 (Fall 1975)

German Dept., Box 413, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI 53211. $6 per year ($2 per issue). ANDREAS HUYSSEN, "*Introduction to Adorno.*" Adorno's development of a theory of culture is viewed *vis-à-vis* the culture theories of Kracauer, Brecht, and Benjamin. The essay "Culture Industry Reconsidered" has special significance for an understanding of Adorno's *oeuvre* since it represents a reconsideration of the critique of Enlightenment. THEODOR W. ADORNO, "*Culture Industry Reconsidered.*" Here Adorno suggests that it may not be (any longer) possible for consumer consciousness to be totally manipulated. Culture is presented as a potentially dynamic force opposed to the culture industry. JUERGEN KRAMER, "*T.S. Eliot's Concept of Tradition.*" Eliot's "dissociation of sensibility" is explicated and then contrasted to Benjamin's aesthetic theory. The concept of history and tradition that is offered in Benjamin is judged more fruitful. DIETER RICHTER, *"History and Dialectics in the Materialist Theory of Literature."* The criticism of historical materialism in post-war Germany as a revival of the neo-Kantian imposition of categories upon history is rejected, but the author never can quite come to terms with the criticism's valid points. GIAN ENRICO RUSCONI, *"Introduction to 'What Is Socialization?'"* Korsch's essay contains several contradictions; Rusconi elaborates these in addition to discussing other criticisms of Korsch by his contemporaries. KARL KORSCH, *"What Is Socialization?"* 21 brief theses, written in very simple language, but revealing much about Korsch's pragmatic Marxism. JOHN KEANE, "*On Tools and Language: Habermas on Work and Interaction.*" This critical exposition of Habermas was previously published in *Arena* and is reviewed in the *Telos* 25 (p. 243). HANS MAYER, "*Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht: Anatomy of an Antagonism.*" The sordid history of the lifelong squabbles between these authors. JACK ZIPES, "*Breaking the Magic Spell: Politics and the Fairy Tale.*" Fairy tales are seen as the expression of the political hostilities of lower classes against their rulers, a dimension which was systematically obscured in the upper classes' appropriation and recording of the tales. CLAUS OFFE, VOLKER RONGE, "*Theses on the Theory of the State.*" The contradictions and problems of increasing state intervention in the maintenance of advanced capitalist societies are succinctly stated. No structural crisis is predicted, but the weakening of certain aspects increases the likelihood of a challenge to the capitalist system. PAUL PICCONE, "*Korsch in Spain.*" Publication of an anthology on Korsch in Spain is viewed as a significant political event, portending major—perhaps revolutionary—change on the Iberian peninsula. The initially optimistic implications of Korsch's thinking are tempered, however, by the structural weakness of his theory: the collapse of theory as only an elaboration of praxis unguided by and lacking the legitimation of any anticipatory meta-theory.

OUR GENERATION, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Fall 1975)

SIMON ROSENBLUM, "*Economic Nationalism and the English Canadial Socialist Movement.*" A critique of R.T. Naylor's left Canadian nationalism. TOM NAYLOR, "*Commentary.*" STEPHEN SCHECTER, in "*Urban Politics in Capitalist Society: A Revolutionary Strategy*" links the praxis of urban politics to the problem of developing a revolutionary strategy. SUSAN WHEELER, in "*Women and the Political Economy,*" a reply to an earlier article by Briskin, argues that the women's movement can lay the basis for a new orientation in revolutionary theory and practice.

POLITICS AND SOCIETY, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1975)

MITCH MEISNER, "*Ideology and Consciousness in Chinese Material Development.*" (pp. 1-32) Discussing current general concerns about the nature of the transition to socialism primarily in rural China, this article presents the experiences of the Tachai Production Brigade, a nationally pre-eminent model collective. Examined from the standpoint of Mao's conception of the unity of theory and practice particular attention is focused on the development of a common consciousness of the strategy and process of change by the farmers. MANUEL CASTELLS, "*Immigrant Workers and Class Struggles in Advanced Capitalism: The Western European Experience.*"(pp. 33-66). An analysis of the growing importance of immigrant workers and the rise in political struggles concerning them. The implications for the class structure as well as the trade-union and political practices are analyzed in terms of the fundamental structural tendencies of monopoly capitalism in Western Europe. ARTHUR MacEWAN, *"Ideology, Socialist Development, and Power in Cuba."* (pp. 67-82). Cuban ideology is sympathetically compared with the more orthodox theory of socialist development, especially as expounded in the Soviet Union. Certain aspects of the Cuban situation directly related to ideology and socialist development are described with special emphasis on their contribution to the development of workers' power. RICHARD C. EDWARDS, "*The Social Relations of Production and Labor Market Structure.*" (pp. 83-108). Emphasizing the

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contemporary theories of internal and segmented labor markets, this essay asserts that behavior observed in the labor market (i.e. the "sphere of circulation") reflects more fundamental processes in production itself (i.e. the "sphere of production"). It further distinguishes between two essentially different systems of control in large firms; "simple hierarchy" and "bureaucratic control." WOODRUFF D. SMITH, "*The Mierendorff Group and the Modernization of German Social Democratic Politics, 1928-1933.*" (pp. 109-129). Concentrating on the four prime members of the Mierendorff group (Leber, Haubach, Schumacher, and Mierendorff) this essay discusses both their individual background and their development into an activist wing of the SPD's Reichstag delegation which achieved notoriety for the violence of its attacks on the Nazis and the KPD. The article also discusses several direct intellectual influences on the group, as well as emphasizing the influence of the war on their set of political ideas.

RADICAL AMERICA, Vol. 9, Nos. 4-5 (July-August, 1975)

Box B, Cambridge, MA 02140. JAMES GREEN, "*Fighting on Two Fronts: Working Class Militancy in the 1940s.*" Tracing the events of the 1930s, the war years, and the early Cold War years of the late 1940s, this essay examines the continued existence of rank-and-file militancy as well as the changes in working class composition, the union bureaucracy, and the state's role in limiting the political impact of the working class. NELSON LICHTENSTEIN, "*Defending the No-Strike Pledge: CIO Politics During World War II.*" (pp. 49-75). Assessing the impact of the wartime no-strike pledge in light of the CIO's prewar character and potential, this essay examines how the enforcement and defense of the pledge contributed to the general decline in political independence and militancy of the industrial unions and advanced a pattern of internal bureaucratization during and after the war. ED JENNINGS, "*Wildcat: The Wartime Strike Wave in Auto.*" (pp. 77-105). Concentrating on the wartime experience of the automobile industry and its union, the United Automobile Workers, this article examines the wide gulf between workers and union leadership. Unlike the rest of the wartime labor movement, this industry was the only one to have a majority of its workers participate in wildcat strikes, and no other union experienced such a large and persistent rand-and-file revolt. The situation is presented in light of the importance of the auto industry in the new surge in wartime production. MARTIN GLABERMAN, "*Epilogue.*" (pp. 106-113). PADDY QUICK, "*Rosie the Riveter: Myths and Realities.*" (pp. 115-131). The actual experiences of working women in the 1940s, as well as the nature of the myths which surround that experience. Analyzing women's role in production (both in the wage-labor force and in the home) and the ideology which it gave rise to, an attempt is made to understand not only the errors in the myths, but also their sources.

RADICAL PHILOSOPHY (Winter 1975)

JOHN TAGG, "*The Method of Max Raphael: Art History Set Back on Its Feet.*" (pp. 3-10). Examining the poverty of most art history (especially English and German), this essay suggests the art historian should involve, and consequently prove, the validity of his/her theory in practical studio activity. Surveying the intellectual influences on Raphael, as well as his many works, the author presents an approach to art which is thus analytical, didactic and political. ROSS POOLE, "*Freedom and Alienation.*" (pp. 11-17). This paper is concerned with the social and personal aspects of Hegel's account of freedom. It seeks to clarify the concepts of freedom and alienation, an understanding of the type of community between the person and their environment which is necessary for freedom, and the absence of which constitutes alienation, as well as, an account of how the existence of this community is related to what we, and not Hegel, would understand as freedom. PHILIP CORRIGAN and DEREK SAYER, "*Moral Relations, Political Economy and Class Struggle.*" (pp. 18-22). Responding in great measure to an earlier essay (in *R.P.* No. 9), by A. Collier, this essay rejects his assertion that moral ideology cannot be presented as economic ideology can and has been—"as an objective appearance, contrasted with the actual reality, but deriving from that reality within the object." This, along with Collier's fundamental notion that moral ideology is first produced in the minds of individuals, are examined as false distinctions and the sources of grave political errors. NICKI JACKOWSKA, "*Seeds of Freedom: Feyerabend's Fairytales.*" A description of one individual's personal gain and enjoyment of Feyerabend's book, *Against Method.* JOHN IBBETT, "*Ernst Cassirer.*" Third in a series of articles on neglected and misunderstood philosophers, this brief essay provides biographical and bibliographical information, as well as placing Cassirer in a philosophical context. VINCENT DI NORCIA, "*Ordinary Language and Radical Philosophy.*" Responding to previous discussion in *Radical Philosophy* (No. 6 and No. 8) on the problem of orthodox English-language philosophy, this essay

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clarifies the complex relations and fundamental distinctions between radical philosophy and common sense. It concludes that radical philosophy cannot define itself solely in terms of common sense or science, but that it is constituted by the basic human project of social self-emancipation. MADAN SARUP, *"Merleau-Ponty's Politics."* A reply to Sonia Kruk's article, "The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty," *Radical Philosophy* No. 11, this brief note offers an alternative reading of Merleau-Ponty emphasizing his rejection of Marxism by referring mainly to *The Adventures of the Dialectic.*

REVIEW OF RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer 1975)

URPE, 41 Union Square West, Room 201, New York, N.Y. 10003, $20.00 per year (4 issues). MICHEL DE VROEY, *"The Separation of Ownership and Control in Large Corporations."* Continuing the debate with the "managerialists," the author argues that Marx perceived the distinction between ownership and control, though he gave it an entirely different and more adequate signification. The article concludes with an intervention into the Fitch and Oppenheimer-Sweezy debate concerning the relations between banks and corporations. WILLIAM SYCKO, *"The Work Shortage: Class Struggle and Capital Reproduction."* At best a synthesis and at worst a *pot-pourri* of "new left" ideas concerning recent developments in the American economy. BRYAN PALMER, *"Class, Conception and Conflict: The Thrust for Efficiency, Managerial Views of Labour and the Working Class Rebellion, 1903-1922."* Basing himself within the discussion emerging out of the work of Marglin and Braverman, the author situates Taylorism within the larger "thrust for efficiency," demonstrates the latter's impact on managerial practices and its role in initiating working class rebellion, and analyzes how, subsequent to these developments, Taylorism's stick was supplemented by the carrot of paternalism in the post-war period. The author also analyzes—and this both the weakest and most interesting part of his article—how Taylorism was part and parcel of an attempt to replace the populist conception of work (the nobility of labor) with a more demeaning conception appropriate to the emergent hegemony of big capital. ANDREW ZIMBALIST, *"The Limits of Work Humanization."* Experiments in work humanization, although they result in increases in productivity, are abandoned because they upset traditional heirarchical relationships. As such, no piecemeal workers' control can pave the peaceful road to socialism. ANDRE GUNDER FRANK, *"An Open Letter about Chile to Arnold Harberger and Milton Friedman."* A compelling letter written by a graduate of the "Chicago school" castigating his former professors for their role in formulating the barbarous policies of the Chilean junta.

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, Vol. 39, No. 3

Room 4331, John Jay College, CUNY, 445 W. 59 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10019. TIM PATTERSON, *"On the Historical Application of Marxist Cultural Theory."* The study of popular culture has been approached in a number of ways, all of them inadequate. The most serious and sophisticated approach has been that of the Frankfurt School, which analyzes popular culture in relation to the systematic distortion of reality and stunting of class consciousness. The Frankfurt School, however, tends to see the bourgeois hegemony as total because the bourgeois worldview is seen as being automatically transposed into the psyche of every individual (through the medium of culture). Patterson proposes a 'Gramscian' analysis which would examine popular culture not solely in terms of how it conditions the individual psyche, but also in terms of the class dynamics which constitute popular culture. By focusing on the organic intellectuals of the exploited classes and their participation in the making of popular culture, one locates the pockets of resistance and transcendence and punctures the myth of one-dimensionality. Patterson demonstrates how this approach works in a brief, but excellent, analysis of country music in the United States. MARIAN SAWER, *"Plekhanov on Russian History: A Marxist Approach to Historical Pluralism."* DAVID SCHWARTZMAN, *"Althusser, Dialectical Materialism, and the Philosophy of Science."* PETER SCHULLER, *"Karl Marx's* Atheism." Marx's atheism is not just a biographical accident, but it is crucial to the whole theory and practice of Marxism. WILLIAM A. WILLIAMS, *"Demystifying Cold War Orthodoxy."* Book review.

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, No. 26 (October-December, 1975)

396 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. $10 for six issues. BARBARA EHRENREICH, DEIDRE ENGLISH, *"The Manufacture of Housework."* According to the popular view, housework in the U.S. has been substantially reduced in the 20th century as a result of numerous technological and social changes. But Ehrenreich and English's historical research shows this view

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to be manifestly incorrect: not only has housework increased, but also, along with other aspects of social life, it has undergone a significant transformation toward greater *rationalization* in accord with the requirements of monopoly capitalism. Turn-of-the-century bourgeois ideology identified the home as the endangered cornerstone of social order; this article analyzes one of the two movements designed to stem the dissolution of the home through the replacement of its disappearing productive functions with new work. The domestic science movement endeavored to reinterpret homemaking as a vocation; in this, it was ably assisted and justified by science. Women of the middle and working classes were exhorted to subscribe to the "science of right living" by studying and applying economics to their home budgeting, biochemistry to their cooking, and the principles of "scientific management" to the operation of the home. The "germ theory of disease" was invoked to justify the necessity for an absolutely spotless, sanitary household: cleaning became women's moral responsibility and their contribution to the public health. Thus, housework has not merely "'expanded to fill the time available;" its increase and its hold on women has been due primarily to the domestic science ideology which created new chores for women and portrayed housework as a full-time profession. Ironically, one of the main constituencies of the domestic science movement were the feminists of that period, who viewed the movement's emphasis on science and self-education as a way of elevating the status of women. By the 1950s, however, the movement's leaders were replaced and its spirit "materialized" by manufacturers and advertisers of household aids and appliances. For them, a truly discriminating, educated group of women such as the domestic science movement claimed to produce would obviously be a disaster. Thus, this article may serve as more than a chronicle of an interesting historical development: it could be seen as providing a warning to contemporary feminists that what may seem to some as progressive moves with regard to women's circumstances—i.e., "wages for housework"—may be as counterrevolutionary as earlier proposals like "science in housework." FRANCESCA FREEDMAN, *"The Internal Structure of the American Proletariat: A Marxist Analysis."* The author repeats the emphasis on "developing a class analysis of the U.S." and proceeds to add little that is new to the many similarly-inspired efforts made to date. THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIALIST FEMINISM, held in Ohio last July and attended by 1600 women, is represented here in speeches by BARBARA EHRENREICH, THE BERKELEY-OAKLAND WOMEN'S UNION, and MICHELLE RUSSELL, and by a report on the conference by BARBARA DUDLEY. Ehrenreich examines socialist feminism, explaining that it is not a "hybrid" but a distinct political tendency on the left, characterized by its understanding that revolutionary transformation must reach into all spheres of life, by its emphasis on the importance of subjective factors in revolutionary change, by its rejection of the notion that history must occur in predetermined sequence, and by its recognition of women as a leading revolutionary force. According to Ehrenreich, socialist feminism's recognition of the import of class struggle secures its position in the revolutionary process in the U.S. The Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union believes that the development of socialist feminist theory requires the development of organizations, specifically, autonomous—but not separatist—women's unions which embody socialist feminism. Such unions can maintain the links between the personal and political, broaden and dynamize one's understanding of the revolutionary process, and grasp sexism and capitalism as an integrated system. Russell slightly dampens national revolutionary ardor by appropriately recalling the strength of international capitalism and emphasizing the need for women in the U.S. to understand their (in many cases, privileged) position *vis-à-vis* women of other, particularly Third World, countries. Dudley's report provides a summary and critical reflections on what she viewed as a confusing and often contradictory conference, one that aimed at both socialist feminist unity and attracting "interested" women. The lack of an agreed-upon political framework seriously hampered efforts to formulate a socialist-feminist strategy for organization-building. Debates over the "principles of unity" were vigorous, and the structure of the conference itself seemed to work against unity, inasmuch as separate panels were held for Third World, lesbian, and class struggles. While she emerged hopeful from the conference, Dudley was concerned about the "structureless movement" condition of socialist feminism, a problem which the conference's lack of discussion about organization did nothing to alleviate. JOHN JUDIS, *"New American Movement, 1975."* Judis evaluates NAM's progress toward the development of a socialist movement in the U.S., and finds it plagued with numerous problems, especially in the area of strategy. Unrealistic and vague approaches prompted the demise of many NAM chapters and thus an overdue reassessment of strategy in 1974. In the course of this reconsideration, NAM has developed different tendencies, some of which (the Marxist-Leninist Caucus and the Learning and Organization Caucus) are seen as divisive by Judis and unproductive. Nonetheless, he still views NAM as "one of the most promising fragments of

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the organized socialist left," whose primary aim at this point should be the development of a unified, multi-racial organization.

LES TEMPS MODERNES, No. 347 (June, 1975)

26, rue de Conde, Paris 5. F. 14. MARCEL JAEGER, "*Le travail salutaire et son enuers.*" Maintaining that modern mental institutions represent a new mode of arbitrary imprisonment, this article analyzes the work performed by their inmates. Thus mental illness comes to be judged by the subject's ability to adapt to work norms; inmates are forced to undergo an increasing proletarianization, whereby the original notion of labor as having therapeutic value has degenerated into pure exploitation. The anti-psychiatry movement, by attempting to abolish insane asylums, has emphasized the readaptation of the "patient" to impersonal and heirarchical work norms, leaving itself open to unresolveable contradictions; and yet, strategies based on alliances of the institutional personnel and inmates under the sign of "workers unite" are ridiculous as long as the web of significations separating and enclosing the normal pathological are not destroyed. ANTRE VELTER, "*La poupée du vent.*" A poem. ELSE PINGAUD-ASSIDON, "*La domination impérialiste française au Maroc.*" A description of the history of Morocco, the nature of the present regime, and its links with imperialism. COMITE DE LUTTE CONTRE LA REPRESSION AU MAROC, "*Briser le mur du silence.*" A catalogue of the repressive actions of the Moroccan government and of French complicity *vis-à-vis* the immigrant population. JEAN-PIERRE OLIVIER, "*Afrique: qui exploite qui?*" A continuation of the critique begun in issue no. 346. Adopting a self-consciously "neo-Maoist" position, the author argues that Samir Amin privileges the problem of accumulation over that of exploitation and thereby adopts a position not unsimilar to that of certain African state bourgeoisies. EDER SADER, "*Cordon Cerrillos et pourvoir prolétaire.*" Written in August of 1973, this article analyzes the successes and failures of the attempts to build organizations for working-class power in a suburb of Santiago, Chile. EDDY CHERKI and MICHEL WIEVIORKA, "*Luttes sociales en Italie: les movements d'autoréduction à Turin.*" An examination of the recent collective struggles to reduce the price of public services (housing, heating, electricity and transportation) in Italy.

LES TEMPS MODERNES, No. 348 (July, 1975)

BERNARD REMY, "*Lettre à propos de mon procès.*" A personal testament and critique of the French army written by someone who is attempting to organize draftees. ALAIN JOXE, "*Le soldat fanfaron et l'état de siège nucléaire.*" At first glance, a mixture of historical materialism, science fiction and Von Clausewitz, this article actually contains some interesting insights into the antinomies of modern military theory and its socio-ideological functions. ROBERTO SANTOS, "*Les noirs dans l'armée de reserve industrielle aux Etats-Unis.*" While ostensibly about the American black industrial reserve army during the period after the Vietnam War, this article actually attempts to discuss much more with, unfortunately, a minimum of coherence. CATHERINE BALITEAU, "*La fin d'une parade misogyne: la psychanalyse lacanienne.*" The author accuses Lacanian psychoanalysis of an incomplete rupture with occidental metaphysics, of resurrecting the Judaeo-Christian tradition of morality, responsibility, etc. What we have here is a rather hasty attempt to out-structure structuralism through an equally hasty reading of Nietzsche. However, when the author notes that Lacanian psychoanalysis always imputes responsibility to the female, while leaving the male blameless, the article begins to reveal its merits. A careful interrogation of the deeply conservative and sexist character of Lacan's basic categories follows. SIBILLE NEDAT, "*Une enfance garrottée.*" A poignant autobiographical account of a child's subjection to familial repression, her rebellion, her subsequent incarceration in a mental institution and her escape. JACQUES GUIGOU, "*La formation comme équivalence et différence.*" Henri Lefebvre's "differentialist" perspective is used to criticize the practice and interrogate the potential of certain recently instituted adult education schemes. JEAN-PIERRE BOMPARD and GILLES POSTEL-VINAY, "*Comment calculer l'antagonisme ouvriers-paysans.*" A commentary on Gutelman's *Structures et réformes agraires.* ARGELIA MELET DE BRAVO, "*Temoignage sur la repression au Venezuela.*"

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